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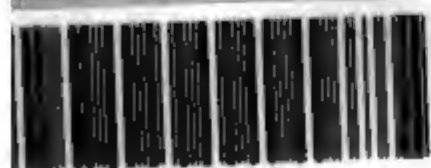
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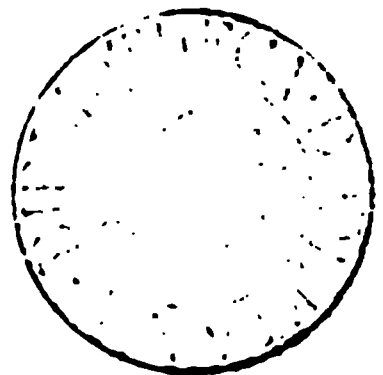
FATHER DARCY.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "MOUNT SOREL," AND THE "TWO OLD
MEN'S TALES."

1846

"Oh Ballard, Ballard!—What hast thou done?—A sort of brave youths otherwise endowed with good gifts, by thy inducement hast thou brought to this utter destruction and confusion."

The Lord Chancellor Hatton's Address—State Tryals.



LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 186, STRAND.

1846.

247. n. 224.

“ What the loftinesse of the argument requireth, I confesse with sorrow I have not performed: yet have I willingly bestowed what pains I have been able. I have neither in other works, nor yet in this, in any sort satisfied myself. Neverthelesse, I shall hold myself recompensed to the full, if by my ready willingnesse to preserve the memory of things, to relate truths, and to train up men's minds to honesty and wisdom, I may find a place for a time, amongst the petty writers of great matters.”—*Camden, Introduction to the Annals.*

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN we were all about to move from Holnicote to Mount Sorel, you may imagine what abundance of old rubbish was disturbed—what long-hoarded relics of bygone times were dragged from their mouldering recesses—what piles of worm-eaten books and packets of time-stained papers brought to light—as new to Mr. de Vere as to any of us.

I was his principal companion during this time, for we grew every day more and more attached to each other; as he, from temper, and I, from circumstance, lived a good deal apart from the rest of mankind—and were both, perhaps, interested rather in the ideal, than the actual.

So we tossed over these old papers with almost equal interest. To him they were precious as the monuments of his family, to me, as records of that great human family to whom we equally belonged.

One day, after we had been thus engaged—I sorting some old books, while he was examining the contents of a huge black trunk—after nearly an hour's silence, during which he had been perusing several papers with an appearance of much interest, he turned to me and said:

“There, Edmund, is something for you.—These seem

curious fragments connected with a very incomprehensible portion of our history—one that has often been the subject of my reflections. These papers do not properly form part of my family archives, and I do not understand, exactly, how they came here; though I believe there have been intermarriages between the De Veres and some of the families in question. The indifference of principals and the carelessness of servants, jumble things together, and throw them into hands where they have properly no right to be. I make you a present of the contents of this trunk, Edmund, for I know you have a liking for such things. When you have nothing better to do, it may interest you to examine these papers; and to exercise your propensity for scribbling, by giving a certain form and consistency to this *fatras* of letters, notes, diaries, and law proceedings."

I accepted the commission with pleasure as a proof of confidence and affection on the part of Mr. de Vere, at that time most precious to my heart: but it was long before I opened the trunk.

When at length, however, I came to examine the papers, I found they had reference to a period, and to circumstances, singularly dark and mysterious:—I conceived that some very important lessons might be derived from this section of the history of our race; and I endeavoured to put the materials together so as to engage interest, and perhaps excite reflections that might possibly be useful:—though no one can be more aware than I myself am, of the imperfect manner in which I have executed my difficult task.

FATHER DARCY.

CHAPTER I.

“For the love of truth hath been my scope and aim.”—*Camden.*

LET us picture to ourselves England at the latter end of the sixteenth century: when—after the desolations and destructions of that immense social revolution which took place under the reign of Henry VIII.; the short and well-directed efforts to establish some kind of order, under Edward VI.; the tremendous reaction, the confusion and misery of Queen Mary's reign it had for nearly forty years reposed under the firm, wise, and temperate sceptre of Queen Elizabeth.

What Queen Elizabeth's reign actually was—the full value of that firm, yet moderate system of government, which was then carried out—under the direction of two or three of the ablest statesmen that ever appeared, and the auspices of perhaps the very cleverest woman that has yet existed—must be learned, not by a comparison with what we now see about us; not by what has succeeded; but by what went before.

We must contrast the England of 1580 with the England of 1501:—and though, doubtless, there is still much left to grieve and sadden the heart in the manners, the ways of thinking, the system of jurisprudence, and the conduct of the government, yet let any one candidly compare that period of our history with those which had preceded it, and a somewhat juster estimate will be formed, than it has lately, perhaps, been the fashion to do—of the immense advances made in civilisation, under the influence of the reformed religion—and of the prodigious increase of domestic prosperity consequent upon the government of that wise monarch, who first carried out its principles into actual public life.

This is not the place to enumerate even the more important of these advances; I merely point them out as a subject of contemplation for the candid and attentive reader of history. My business is with pictures: my design to raise again before your eye the scenes of that green and beautiful England—her soil no longer deluged with the blood of contending parties—the fierce contest of religious violence assuaged—no foreign enemy permitted to set his foot upon her sacred shores; and her ships and her commerce circumnavigating the globe.

Imagine her, to yourself, in all the graces of her still wild and unsubdued beauty.

The wide extent of her vast oak forests; interspersed with all the native trees that enrich our landscapes; the crimson and gold of the beeches, the green elms, the scarlet maples, the dark glossy hollies clothing

her hilly sides—and hanging thick and pendant over the gushing streams that sparkled through her secluded valleys.

Those delightful woodland scenes so dear to the heart of the native Saxon; which Shakspeare has transferred to his forest of Arden; scenes where the outlaw once had dwelt in his greenwood bower, under the shade of melancholy boughs,—where the red stag sheltered, and the herds of fallow-deer grazed amid the sunny glades.

But the forest was not all of the country which remained in its primitive state.

Though most of the best land of England had long been enclosed and cultivated, immense districts remained in a state of nature; either as barren sandy heaths—green commons of prodigious extent—or black dreary moors and mosses. The unredeemed tracts were of such extent, that the aid of the “land-pilot” of Comus was frequently necessary. Even within the memory of man, a sort of lighthouse was standing to guide the traveller through wastes of this description, among the high lands of Lincolnshire;—lands which, under the influences of a system now perhaps to be destroyed, have been redeemed at a vast expense, and are now waving with seas of corn.

The fragrance and beauty of the sandy heaths covered with gorse, purple ling, centaury, and hawkweed; the sense of freedom and community of rights inspired by the wide commons, nibbled by flocks of little black-nosed sheep; the mysteries of those dark, gloomy moors, as

seen under the indigo clouds of a November sky—peopled as they were by the superstition of the times, with witches, demons, dwarfs, and fairies—served to elevate the imagination; and, doubtless, added force to that ardour of sentiment, in matters either of love, patriotism, or religion, which distinguished the period.

He who lived in such scenes—sat by the lonely mere, or visited the silent streams tenanted by the crane, the egret, the melancholy heron, and the innumerable broods of lesser waterfowl—became a poet before he was aware of it, and an enthusiast unknown to himself.

In spite of those gloomy passages which darken her history—but which, acted upon that narrow stage then occupied by the court and government, seem little to have affected the general sentiment—England was a merry England.

It was a free, happy England. The people of this country enjoyed a share of domestic liberty, and cherished a sense of domestic independence, almost totally unknown to the miserable serfs and peasants of the continent.

The aspect of the country gave evidence of this.—The haughty Norman castles might rival those of the warlike barons of France and Germany; but where else could have been found the innumerable country houses, built by the gentry?—the men of the middle class of society—numbers of which edifices still remain to attest by their splendour the general diffusion of prosperity.

“For now,” says Camden, “began more noblemen’s and private men’s houses to be raised here and there in

England; built with largeness, neatness, and beautiful show than ever in any other age; and surely to the great ornament of the kingdom."

Numbers of these were erected by the Catholic gentry; a fact which Butler accounts for, by the circumstance of their owners appearing at court much less frequently than their Protestant neighbours; and thus being spared many expenses incident to such habits; but which at least proves that they were not so grievously oppressed by pecuniary fines, as it is the pleasure of some writers of their party to represent.

Rushton Hall, in Northamptonshire, may be quoted as one of the most beautiful specimens of the domestic architecture of Queen Elizabeth's time: it, with the Town-Hall of Rothwell, and the beautiful ruin of Leveden, now buried in the surrounding woods, was erected by Sir Thomas Tresham: a Catholic gentleman of wealth and consideration, though a great sufferer for his religious opinions—of which the unfinished state of the Town-Hall, and the ruin of an edifice never completed, seem to tell the melancholy story.

The houses of the farmers and yeomen were large and substantial, though certainly not furnished with modern luxury. The stalwart master of the mansion sat at the head of his huge oaken board, dispensing their daily food to his hinds and labourers; and, stretched at night upon his hard pallet, thought his good Queen Bess not to be envied upon her throne.

The hind or the peasant sought his warm thatched cottage, where the houseleek grew and the swallow

harboured, and cherished no jealous heartburning against the man who fared better than he.

Exclusive pride on the one hand, and that black heart-rending jealousy which infects the lower ranks of society on the other, were alike unknown. Each man accepted his rank in life as dispensed by the hand of his Creator; enjoyed its pleasures frankly; and never thought of enviously comparing his lot with that of others more splendid, but not more happy than himself.

Even the very beggar under the hedge was a merry being, and thought a "cup of ale was a drink for a king."

All this cheerful harmony of classes, in which each one, forming a portion of the whole, was content to execute his part in his proper place—where some were satisfied to perform, though they were only to hold second and third violins, and loyally supported with their instruments the chosen leaders of the band—is at an end.

We must all play first fiddles now, or we become very ill-humoured and enraged musicians.—How the concert is to fare may be questioned by the lovers of the good old music; but *C'a ira* is become the motto of the world.

It is impossible for a mind of any imagination not to regret in this picture the absence of the monasteries, which, under the destructive agency of Henry and his minister Cromwell, had altogether disappeared.

The magnificent abbey situated on the bank of some gentle stream; its rich meadows covered with sheep and kine—the convent bell tolling for evening prayer—the beautiful priory—the hermit's silent cell—all had vanished.

The monk in his long, waving garments, book in hand, the type of a life of contemplation—the holy nun—the ancient palmer—were gone. The tide of destruction had swept over all this, and the place thereof shall know it no more.

The unsparing and indiscriminate destruction of the monasteries was a very doubtful feature in the Reformation, and is still by many, not without reason, regretted. To destroy is easy; but to re-erect that which was founded upon sentiment, impossible. The sole vestiges which remain of that life of learned leisure, devoted to the higher purposes of being, undesecrated by the sordid struggles of every day life, remain in our two universities. And oh! may the hand of innovation at least spare them! And leave us these last relics of days, when man, with all his errors, lived to God rather than to Mammon; and prized the regions of intellect and the heart's best freedom better than whole miles of smoking factories, millions of web-weaving slaves, and mountains of untold gold.

One glance at the different classes of society which then possessed this lovely land of England, and to my story.

There was the queen—ay, every inch a queen—wise, courageous, religious, learned; magnificent, accomplished, spirited, and gay. Affable to the lower orders, resolute with the higher. A lover of mercy, yet of unflinching severity in justice; splendid, yet frugal of her people's money; emulous of peace, prepared for war. The noble leader of the great march of intellect which then began for the world of Europe; the

refuge of the distressed churches; the mother of the reform; the champion of civil and religious liberty throughout the world.

Yes—religious toleration and equal justice were inscribed upon her banners and engraved upon her heart; and it was not till the insupportable attempts at usurpation on the part of the Roman pontiff, and the unprincipled proceedings of his emissaries here, drove her into a contest with the ancient religion for life and crown, that she departed from those principles of indulgence and mercy.

The history of the times teems with proofs of the truth of this assertion.

See her in her rich dress and ruff stiff with gold; her small crown upon her royal head; her bosom covered with inappreciable jewels; her train of velvet and ermine, borne by that nobleman who follows her.

The people shout—the people rend the welkin with the voice of frank enthusiastic love and loyalty; while she, turning from side to side, rejoices in their joy, and answers their vociferous greetings with—

“ I thank you, meun peuple—God bless you too, myne peuple.”

A noble aristocracy surrounded this queen—Arundel and Norfolk, De Grey of Wilton, Howard of Effingham, St. John of Bletso, Nevilles, Stanleys, Devereux, and De Veres.

Men of true ancient blood, with all the associations and long honourable memories which cleave to those of a high descent, whose ancestors slumber in our hoary cathedrals, their time-honoured banners waving overhead.

Nor was that other nobility wanting, that aristocracy of God's own forming—the men of expansive intellect, daring genius, and lofty principles—the Burleighs, the Walsinghams, the Bacons, the Hattons. Men selected by her own sagacious eye, and endowed with the highest dignities about her throne. An innumerable troop of knights, esquires, and gentlemen followed; the bold and spirited sons of those who had fought in the fields of France. Nor were wanting the substantial citizens in their furred gowns and gold chains, rivaling in wealth the burghers of Flanders. As for the inferior classes of society, they were, as I have said above, frank-hearted, simple, content, and merry. They had little luxury, but much sport: few newspapers, but many pastimes. Plenty of air, plenty of laughter, and abundance of song—for every one was a minstrel in his way, from Hodge who whistled at his plough, to the milkmaid lilting under her pail.

What makes all our fine slip-slop dairymaids and free-thinking journeymen, so silent now?

The old song is right, they *were* “golden days those of good Queen Bess.”

Hearts beat warm, and fancy ran high. The new discovered realms of the west excited the imagination to the most romantic adventures; the newly-discovered and far more glorious realms of thought exercised yet higher influence. While the struggles of two opposing systems of religion accustomed men to martyrdom—in other words, to the sacrifice of the actual to the spiritual, of the present to the future, of the body to the soul—and thus raised the tone of the human character.

Love and friendship reigned triumphant in those high devoted hearts.—The generous loves, and the ardent friendships maintained through life and death by the gallant youths of those days, are among the most pathetic pages of its wild and romantic story.

The influence which their intense feelings upon the subject of religion exercised upon the minds of the generality of men in those times, would astonish the cold-blooded reasoners and philosophers of ours.

A little more must be said upon that head before terminating a preface, perhaps already too long.

It is difficult to realise to the mind of the nineteenth century, the hold which religion had upon the human heart in the sixteenth. The devoted loyalty to an ancient Church, and what they esteemed the honour of God on the one side—the deep reverence for truth, and the enthusiastical defence of what they looked upon as the cause of Christ, upon the other. The abhorrence with which those of the old Church stigmatised what they esteemed the licentious impieties of the new—the still deeper horror with which the barbarous cruelties of that Church were regarded by the reformed.

Every passion of human nature was enlisted on either side; and while we weep over the martyred saints who fell in the cause of religious emancipation, let us shed a tear over those other victims of mistaken principles, the disciples of that Roman priesthood, who, blinded by casuistry, and betrayed by her assumption of spiritual authority, yielded their passive consciences to the

guidance of men, too frequently the mere agents of unprincipled ambition, and many of whom, there is too much reason to suspect, were unbelievers in the very first rudiments of those doctrines which they supported with such barbarous pertinacity.

The reign of Elizabeth was one unremitting contest against these dark and dangerous forces; in the course of which she was precipitated into measures, which have cast upon her name the brand of a cruelty, abhorrent to her heart and foreign to her character.

But it was a fearful struggle which she had to maintain, not against the battle-sword flashing in the face of day—that she had met and overcome—but against the secret knife, the hidden intrigue, the insidious power of the whispering tongue; against mysterious enemies creeping in darkness from house to house; poisoning the ear of her subjects, dissolving the ties of allegiance, subverting the very foundations of good faith between man and man, by their villanous doctrines of equivocation and falsehoods.

The very men who in secret awaited the favourable moment for open rebellion, being instructed to affect every outward appearance of patriotism and loyalty till the hour of vengeance should arrive. Can we marvel that a government thus situated, found itself compelled, each succeeding year, to have recourse to measures of increasing severity?

But this history seems, of late years, to have been strangely misrepresented—and possibly owing to the undue authority attached to the representations of the Catholic writers of that day, most of them Jesuits,

whose principles with regard to the sacredness of truth, should render them very suspicious witnesses in any matter where their own interests or prejudices are concerned.

I will further take leave to remind the reader, who may not lately have looked into this portion of our history, that several of the priests living upon the continent, seeing the favourable manner in which religion appeared to be settled under Queen Elizabeth, feared that the Catholics might, in spite of the issue of the celebrated bull, finally be lost to the papal authority.* For, provided they were allowed the consolation of their own ceremonies in private, the majority made little scruple of outwardly conforming and attending upon the services of the Church of England, which was indeed regarded by many as merely a branch from their own. In consequence of this apprehension, Cardinal Allen, Father Parsons, &c. &c., founded seminaries at Douay, Rheims, Rome, and elsewhere—for the education of priests destined to the English mission. These young men were brought up in the most exaggerated ultramontane principles; and in habits of the most unlimited obedience to the commands of their religious superiors; and were, together with the Jesuits—secretly introduced into the kingdom—employing their time in journeying in various disguises, from house to house,

* The fines for recusancy, during the first eleven years of Elizabeth, in fact, until the bull of Pius Quintus was issued, were only one shilling for each Sunday. And though she refused, in spite of the instances of the Spanish Ambassador, to allow them churches, they were allowed undisturbed to celebrate the ceremonies of their religion in their private houses.

reconciling, as it was called, the English Catholics to Rome: that is to say, dissolving the ties which bound them to their sovereign—taking them out of the hands of their native priests, and under this new guidance, leading them to renounce their allegiance under pain of excommunication—and to embrace principles incompatible with any regular government, and subversive of all social order.

The perversion of ideas, with respect to the regard due to existing authority, to the sacred nature of oaths, and to the duties of patriotism—and the necessity of defiling the conscience by the practice of constant equivocation hence arising—laid the foundation of the sorrows and the crimes which ensued.

CHAPTER II.

“Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments cost.”

THERE was a royal *fête* going on in the splendid halls of the Palace of Old Westminster.

The lofty and magnificent apartment was hung with tapestry of the richest and most varied hues, and the roofing, cornices, and grovings, glittered with burnished gold, reflecting the light of innumerable sconces filled with prodigiously thick wax candles, that blazed around. On the tapestry was represented the story of the Ten Virgins, from the Evangelist, in living forms and glowing dyes proper to that age when the art of design had attained to so much perfection, and that of producing the most splendid colours was so well understood.

The blessed virgins with their flaming lamps, almost seemed to live again, and illuminate the scene; while the miserable, rejected sisterhood, with their exhausted oil, gave depth and relief to the picture.

The vast room was crowded with gay and splendid groups, such as long had adorned the court of that brave old queen.

She sat at the head of the apartment, upon a costly carved chair covered with cloth of gold, elevated upon a dais, and under a splendid canopy—looking

like an aged lion whose spirit and courage yet remained unextinguished, in spite of the wrinkles of age, and the inroads of time and care.

And yet, those who had loved—and many there were who had truly and deeply loved—that great though faulty woman, might discern an expression upon her face which it was painful to consider too attentively; for the high-spirited, courageous, yet fresh and cheerful countenance, had been exchanged for one where anxiety was mingled with what might almost be called fierceness. The red eye glared, the mouth was stern and resolved, the whole air told the tale of that long contention with insidious and secret foes and unsparing open enemies, which had embittered the last twenty years of her life.

A contest which had without intermission been sustained ever since that fatal bull of Pius V. had converted religious dissidents into political traitors, and had rendered a temper naturally just, tolerant, and indulgent, suspicious and severe.

The blood, too, of so many she had personally known—and of some whom she had personally loved—which had been shed upon the scaffold, laid heavy at her heart. She had suffered deeply, as her waverings and irresolutions prove, before she could bring herself to sign the sentences. And she had, perhaps, taken refuge in the endeavour to render herself insensible to the dreadful subject, and thus to preserve the equilibrium of her too excitable mind; but such a resource against the stings of regret, it may be of remorse, infallibly tends to harden the character.

Yet there as she sat—gorgeously attired—glittering with jewels, and every inch a queen—filled as that chamber was with men of all descriptions, of differing religions, of various political opinions, and of conflicting interests, few among them all, we might almost say scarce one, but revered in heart that aged monarch; few, we might almost say not one, but would have drawn his sword to defend her.

No longer mingling in the galliard, and dancing, high and disposedly, herself; there she sat, still surrounded by her troops of gallant favourites—the wise, the beautiful, the able, and the good : for among such were her favourites chosen. Last, but not least, there stood that one, who could not be called graceful—could scarcely even be called beautiful, but whose brave and gallant spirit had won her heart: her mother's heart it was, which had yearned to the proud petulant boy, because his temper was full as fiery and lofty as had ever been her own.

Her Essex was there—and the aged Burleigh was there—and his nearly equally able son, afterwards Earl of Salisbury ; and Hatton, the accomplished gentleman and the man of temperate judgment and sound good sense ; and Hunsdon, and Raleigh, and Blunt, and numbers whose names it is useless to recapitulate.

“ Girt with many a baron bold,
Sublime their star-clad fronts they rear,
Mid the rest a form divine,
Her eye proclaims her of the royal line.”

Of such was the group composed, which more immediately surrounded the queen.

The hall lower down was filled with beautiful and distinguished-looking figures, all splendidly attired—some were dancing, some walking round the room, some sitting on the gold and crimson benches that surrounded the apartment : a gay crowd actuated by the same passions, and employed in much the same conversations, gay or sad, which occupy youth and beauty at such times in all ages.

Will you walk round the hall with me, and cast your eyes upon these groups ? I will single out a few in whom I am deeply interested, and point them out to your observation.

Look upon that splendid seat, which stands in a corner of the hall ; it is somewhat obscurely situated, not for want of, but it is darkened by excess of, light ; it stands so near one of those flashing sconces, that your dazzled eye can scarcely see the features or countenances of those who occupy it ; while the loud cheerful voice of the trumpets, clarions, and flutes, which are sounding the galliard, conceals what is said from all but you and me.

There are two people sitting upon that low seat—a gentleman and a young lady. The gentleman is dressed in a rich suit of black satin laid thick with gold lace ; his doublet is of cloth of gold ; the black cloak which hangs over one shoulder is lined with plush, and ornamented with silk and gold tassels and laces ; the dress is costly, and is that of a man of easy fortune ; it has cost him 130*l.*, such as pounds were in Queen Elizabeth's days :—but we will have done with his dress ; look at him again. He is perhaps scarcely what you

would call young—he may be eight-and-twenty or thirty years of age ; he is somewhat above the middle stature, with thick dark brown hair closely cut, waving rather than curling round his head. His features are rather of the ordinary stamp, neither very handsome nor the contrary ; but there is something in the expression of both face and figure, which no one can pass by without noticing.

There is an energy of thought, a vehemence, a passion, a resolution and force of character, displayed in the whole outward man, which cannot be mistaken or overlooked. The dark eye melts and flashes—is ardent, is impassioned, is stern, is almost cruel by turns ; and yet there is a depth of sensibility when it expresses the softer feelings, which steals into the very heart of those he loves—and excites in return an affection that is almost incredible—such is its intensity. He is born to exercise the most extraordinary and romantic influence over the circle in which he moves, for he is devotedly, he is immeasurably beloved by his intimates and friends. To the world in general, he has been till of late little known, and that chiefly as the wildest among the most boisterous of his age—as the most reckless of revellers, the most enterprising of brawlers, the most exaggerated in every extravagance, the most unrestrained in every licence—at the tavern, at the tennis, at the theatre, at the gaming-table, at the banquet, at the masque ; who so wild, so excited, so intoxicated as he ?

The lady who sits by him, is attired in fair white satin, with a fall, as it was called, of the richest Flanders

lace ; and her fine natural hair drawn up, and dressed according to the fashion of the day, yet with a certain pure and beautiful simplicity—which, indeed, characterises her whole appearance.

Her features are of the most exquisite delicacy of outline ; it is a face such as Raphael would have chosen as a model for the Virgin Mother ; but there is, if possible, something still less of the woman, and still more of the angel than even his divine imagination has painted. The transparent whiteness of her fair skin, is scarcely tinted by the slightest blush of colour ; but is relieved from insipidity by a certain holy darkness that surrounds her eyes ; her expression is calm, rather than serene. Indeed a shade of melancholy, and lines which bespeak firmness and determination of character, may be detected under the tranquil stillness of her deportment.

The young man is imploring some favour with a force and earnestness which seem scarcely compatible with the careless animation of the surrounding scene. She listens, though she will not consent, while her serene and holy eyes meet his calmly.

“ You will not dance a corant with me. You will not pace a cinque pace—yet this once—this once more—though it be the last time we are ever to tread a measure. This once, Grace—unutterably beauteous Grace—this once. . . . ”

Such were his pleadings.

“ No—why I am here I know not ; why,” looking down upon her sparkling carcanet of jewels, “ why I am

here at all, I know not. My heart is far from such scenes. What have I to do in this revelry?"

"And why not? Why should you not adorn that old lion-hearted woman's court—the fairest among the wondrously fair now surrounding her like as it were a sunny blaze and glory of beauty. Why not you, fairest Grace? It is true your eyes are like those of the Virgin Mother herself—your face as that of one of the heavenly host. We are not worthy even to offer worship to thee, saint and beauteous virgin. Yet, why shouldst thou be thus adorned, and these and all innumerable graces lavished on thee..... and all—but for man's despair!" he added, vehemently, passionately, bitterly.

"Talk not to me in this way, Robert," said she, casting down those beauteous eyes; and assuming, quite unconsciously, the expression of that heavenly purity and modesty which the immortal painter has given to that holy mother of whom we spoke, that tender type of womanhood. "Oh, where have you learned this sad profanity in your speech?—Do you think to please me, sinful and feeble woman as I am, by comparisons such as these! Comparisons with that glorious Queen of Heaven—whose honour, alas! in these days of atheism and blasphemy, is forgotten and obscured.—It ought not to be so with you..... But hope not to please me by such impieties—impieties repulsive to my heart!"—

And she turned away from him.

"Impieties!—blasphemy!—Nay," said he, his counte-

nance suddenly changing, and a darkness overspreading his wonderfully expressive eye—"who knows?"

He was for a moment plunged into deep thought, then he said:

"Angel worshipper with a holy and persecuted church;—thy reproof is just!"

"Yet most unjust," he added, significantly.

Then he rose from his seat in a reckless kind of manner; as if just or not, he was one to defy reproach; and, leaving her side, advanced to where another most lovely and blooming creature sat.

If the fair creature whom he had quitted was beautiful, with all that holy and spiritual beauty which I have attempted to describe—the one he approached was of a far different appearance.

No blooming rose just bursting into blow, was ever more fair, more rich in colouring—more replete with all earth's brightest charms than she.

Her black abundant hair fell in richest curls over her swelling cheek, which bloomed with nature's brightest roses; those large gray eyes sparkled in their sweetness; that lovely mouth spoke all the tenderness of her warm and feeling heart. Her figure was beautiful and noble, though of the middle size;—it seemed rounded by health, and a youth of joy.

If one young lady might be taken as the type of the holy beauty of the angelic host; the other was the child of the laughing earth, when she pours forth the wealth of her enjoyments and her glories around.

But look at those dark gray eyes; see how they flash as he approaches!—Can you see her heart beating

under that rich purple robe, which, adorned with gold and jewels, hangs upon her beauty?

She will not refuse to dance—

That white and jewelled hand is soon placed in his; he leads her forth, and they tread the mazes of the dance together.

Near to the place occupied by the state of the magnificent old queen, another group is observable. A young man just entering into manhood, is standing by a sweet innocent-looking girl, who is gazing with a sort of pleased wonder at a scene to her almost altogether new.

They are both younger than those you saw at the other end of the room. The young man is dressed in a suit of white satin and silver tissue, laid all over with silver lace; his cloak of white satin lined with peach-coloured plush, and richly embroidered and ornamented with silver, hangs negligently over one arm.

He is a charming-looking person, tall, fair, well-proportioned; every movement of his figure is full of grace; he is almost the perfection of opening manly beauty; his fine countenance bespeaks at once energy, sensibility, goodness, and truth; and in spite of the extreme elegance of his dress and appearance, there is a simplicity and air of ingenuous candour about him which is inexpressibly attractive, united to a spirit, force, and dignity, above his years. He is bending down and speaking to the sweet pretty young lady who sits a little before him; her white flowing dress falling softly in clouds over the crimson stool she occu-

pies; her fair hair hangs abundant round her throat and face; and her eyes so blue, so ingenuous, so simple, so clear, are lifted up to him, as he speaks, with a pleased attention.

You might not suppose it, but so it is—that simple, unpretending girl is the heiress of broad lands and splendid halls; but she has lived retired, and her life has been spent in those bowery green retreats, imbibing the sweetest influences of nature; and protected by her widowed father. She has escaped the infections of a court, and been sheltered from those storms which agitate the society around her.

The father of Evelyn, Mr. Mulsho of Goddeshurst in Buckinghamshire, was a gentleman of considerable fortune, educated in the Catholic Church, to whose creed and discipline he still, in a great measure, adhered; he was, however, of a reasoning and philosophic turn of mind, and of a temper the most benevolent and humane.

His whole soul had revolted at the childish bigotry and barbarous cruelties of Queen Mary's reign; and contrasting the confusion and misrule of those unhappy years with the peace, tranquillity, and equal justice, of her great sister's sway, he had uniformly supported the government, and had, with a great number of the Catholic gentry at the time of the Armada, come openly forward to offer his purse and his sword in the defence of the common country.

In the schism which had long secretly rent asunder the Catholic party—between the Catholics of the old English school, who, with the spirit of their forefathers, resisted the usurpations of the Roman pontiff, and the

disciples of the Jesuits and seminary priests, who were devoted to Rome with a blind fanaticism unknown before in this country—Mr. Mulsho had resolutely adhered to the ancient party, or, as it was called, that of Queen Mary's priests.

The moderation of his opinions, the excellence of his understanding, and the even tranquil course of his life, had won the esteem of all men, and few were more welcome at the court of Queen Elizabeth than he.

At that court he, however, but rarely appeared; he was jealous for his motherless daughter, and lived with her retired at his country-seat, only associating with a few of the Catholic families in the neighbourhood; avoiding as far as was in his power any very familiar intercourse with those who had yielded themselves up to the new and dangerous influences of the Jesuits. These, however, were chiefly to be found among the younger and more rash and inexperienced men.

“ Ah!” said the temperate and judicious Hatton, “ they do not go about to seduce the ancient and discreet men, for they (as the priests say) be too cold; but they assail with their persuasions the younger sort, and of those the most ripe wits, whose high hearts and ambitious minds do carry them headlong.”

But to return to the ball-room.

The effect produced upon the character, by the different schools of religious opinion in which it had been formed, was exemplified in the three young ladies before us—a contrast which the most careless reader of history cannot help remarking between the great leaders and captains of the contending parties for and against the

reform: between Guise and Coligny—the Duke of Alva and William of Orange—Henry of Navarre and Henry of Anjou—Mary and Elizabeth of England: and so for the rest. The education which Evelyn Mulsho had received, though nominally Catholic, partook of the enlightened opinions upon moral and religious subjects which took rise in her day; and her manner and countenance showed their effect.

The same remark might apply to the two other young ladies; the cold ascetic beauty of the one, the somewhat too animated graces of the other, contrasted with the sweet, innocent smile, the gentleness, cheerfulness, and ineffable simplicity of the third.

There are several other pleasing and high-bred young men, intimate friends of the gentlemen above described, who take part in this royal entertainment.

There was Mr. Winter, an intelligent, animated young man, in his tawny satin suit, cut and embroidered, and slashed with tawny cloth of tissue, and ornamented with abundance of tawny-coloured lace, dancing away with all the gaiety proper to his age. There was the common friend of them all, Francis—in a suit of murrey satin—no one much likes Francis, he is so cold and cautious in his demeanour; and Winter makes sport of his grave, pondering face, as he flashes gaily by, dancing with that fairest Bridges, whose syren smiles ship-wrecked a far mightier than he.

And there is that tall man with his half Scottish, half Norman features, his hooked nose, and his somewhat high cheek-bones—he is a gentleman pensioner,

and he well becomes the gaudy dress he wears, as he paces about the room; he is called Thomas.

The aged queen looks on with her red and fiery eye, and her countenance softens into indulgence and kindness, as she watches the gay revellers, and marks the glittering groups pass and repass, and glide away in the intricacies of the dance.

She is happy at this moment herself; for her favourite sits near her feet, conversing in that delightful and spirited manner which has perhaps pleased her too well. She does not perceive, luckily, that his eyes fall more often than they ought to do, upon his fairest Bridges—that courtly coquette who is dancing so daintily along.

He is talking to his royal mistress of Cadiz, and of the sultry suns and splendid cities of Spain, of her towering sierras, her magnificent cathedrals, her well-trained infantry, her countless treasures of pearl and gold, and of all her gorgeous and most barbarous pride, power, wealth, and cruelty.

She shudders at the tale—thinks of the burning auto-da-fé, and of that cold and cruel king attired in his crown of empire, and watching the miserable wretches burn: she cries out in her secret heart, “How long, oh! Lord, how long?”

She has not the gift of prophecy, anointed queen though she be—she cannot see that sun of glory sink in the blood and smoke of those unhallowed and devilish sacrifices, and the darkness and the desolation that shall long overshadow the land.

She looks round the brilliant assembly of youth and

beauty before her, and her experienced eye singles out the fair and stalwart youths there assembled, with frames of energy, and eyes full of generous courage and assurance. She counts them, as one that maketh up her jewels.

But she had, in spite of all her wisdom, too much of a foolish woman's eye. She overlooked that countenance with features ordinary enough but with an expression so remarkable, and her eye dwelt upon the beautiful Everard. But she was not altogether mistaken in thus singling him out; for Everard was a rare and inestimable pearl.

The queen ordered Essex to bring up that young man, and she soon won his heart by her kind manner, and varied and pointed conversation.

He met her favour as she loved to have her favours received, neither with too base an observance, nor with too forward a presumption. She loved to see all around her maintain a free-born English heart, even in her royal presence; and, though the flattery was irresistible that simulated affection, she never could away with mere servility.

In the meantime the music blows louder and louder, the dance becomes more and more animated; Robert seems to have forgotten the cold and ungrateful Grace Vaux, and to be for the time the slave of the enraptured Eleanor.

Oh! how sweet and fascinating were her smiles when thus made happy by the attentions of her heart's idol, till at length, led by that intoxication which has turned the head of many a graver man in such circumstances,

Robert seemed to have forgotten the severe and beauteous saint to whom his heart's secret adoration was devoted, and to be revelling with delight, dancing with her beauteous rival.

The fair and holy Grace, unlike so many saints that have been seen in this court and in this world, is content, it would appear, under the desertion her severity has occasioned. She sat lost, as I said, behind the blaze of light above her, watching the dancers with a calm and serious eye from which every appearance of severity had vanished, though its expression was darkened, as it were, by hidden sorrow.

Sometimes gravely and thoughtfully she gazes upon the grand and noble queen, and a slight shudder runs through the tender frame of that beautiful creature. Sometimes her eye wanders amid the gay and thoughtless groups of dancers, and a mingled expression of pity and of wonder crosses her beauteous brow. Sometimes a sad and wintry smile steals over those sweet and serious lips, as the merry jest and echoing laugh ring upon her ear.

So she sat lost in her own reflections, and apparently forgotten by all around. No one approached her, no one spoke to her ; she seemed deserted by all that giddy world. At last a gentleman of the middle age and of a remarkably pleasing aspect entered : he was dressed in a most elegant and expensive manner, his white satin vest and cloak embroidered with gold and pearls, and his soft curling fair hair was arranged with almost feminine nicety : his dress was delicately perfumed, as were his fine embroidered white gloves, with some of those rare and exquisite perfumes then so much esteemed :

he came from behind a group of gentlemen who stood around the distant door, being among those admitted rather as spectators, than as guests.

These gentlemen were crowded together in one dense mass under the orchestra where the music was placed, and were all handsomely dressed, as well as the one who approached Grace Vaux.

The maiden queen, even in a favourite like Essex, could scarcely forgive any neglect of the outward habiliments ; he was an exception—a tolerated sloven—but in any one else who presented himself, whether as dancer in the galliard or merely as spectator at the door, such remissness was considered inexcusable. The cavalier, however, that now came up, was certainly no offender in this respect. He had, indeed, quite an air of studied elegance, and his delicate complexion and peculiarly sweet blue eye rendered his appearance extremely agreeable ; he was a little too much *embonpoint* perhaps to be perfectly handsome, and his countenance might have seemed to some too soft and languid ; it carried a certain appearance of indolence, and of a negligent and indifferent temper.

There was, likewise, an indescribable something, slow, almost cautious, in his manner of speaking, which to a nice critic would not have been engaging—but they were not very nice critics in that day.

He approached the place where the fair votary sat retired, and, with a certain air of assured welcome, placed himself by her side.

She did not start, or betray the slightest degree of surprise or emotion as he did so ; but raising her eyes,

fixed them upon him without speaking, only acknowledging his presence by a slight almost imperceptible move of the head. She then resumed her former attitude, again casting her eyes upon the ground. He rested his head upon his white gloved hand, gazed upon her in silence for a second or two, which gaze she received without seeming to notice it.

At last, in a very soft insinuating tone of voice, he said, "And who must not rejoice to see the fairest Grace Vaux in this scene of pleasure?"

"I am here," said she, without turning her head or raising her eyes from the floor, "as one in a strange place."

"What place upon this dark and troubled earth but must seem strange to the denizen of heaven?" said he, in a low voice; "and yet, as the angels at times descend and visit this sphere upon their holy purposes, so the virgin saint of Harroden Magna has done well to be here."

She only answered with an almost imperceptible sigh; and he, his head still resting upon his hand, continued to gaze upon her.

After a second silence of considerable length, he began again in the same calm, low, unaccented tone:

"Yet this must needs be a strange spectacle for one whose eyes have been purged by a drop of that precious herb which destroys the vain enchantment of the outward seeming, and shows us things as in truth they are."

She cast those clear bright orbs full upon him, turning slowly like the wheel of a planet. Their dark splendour almost dazzled him.

"It is" was all she answered.

"The Hall of Eblis. . . ."

It dropped from his lips so softly, that she could but just hear the words.

"You have read the legend," he went on in his ordinary and low tone of voice; "if not, it were a legend worth the perusal, for it is grand and it is terrible. There, sits he—the damned monarch of that mighty crew—gorgeous in gold and crimson, pearl and priceless gems the floor of Hell is paved with gold and gems, fair creature. . . . And there those cursed and most miserable spirits are crowding and clustering, all decked and dizened out. . . . Smiles are on their lips—the glitter of sin is in their eye and in their hearts *hell fire!*"

Her countenance, so pale before, grew paler at the terrific description;—but not a feature moved.

"Have you read the legend? Did you say that you had studied the legend?"—bending forward with a sort of quiet, conversational expression of countenance, as if asking the most indifferent question.

"Yes."

"I have often thought," continued he, after a third pause, resuming the conversation in a careless tone, but with a voice low as ever. "what a strange thing a crowd of dancers is! Close your ears with your hands—silence the music which incites them—look upon those flesh and blood creatures—and they instantly appear as dreamy phantoms.—Has the fairest Grace ever tried that experience?"

"I have in a fantastical mood sometimes," she said.

“ Strange metamorphosis ! But there is,” again lowering his voice, “ a more extraordinary effect sometimes produced upon my mind : these are circumstances under which those who *close their ears*, become to me as mere phantoms.”

No reply.

“ Singular, but true. The ear, fairest Grace, is as the porch of life;—well has the matchless poet represented the venom which destroyed the royal Dane, as distilled through the porches of the ear—admirable fable ! Deep and deadly hath that venom been which through that little gate hath found its entrance, carrying death not only to the frail and perishing body, but perdition to the everlasting soul.”

She sighed.

“ Have you ever marked,” he again began, a “ number of light, many-coloured autumn leaves dancing as if in wild delight before the pleasant morning wind ? It sweeps them by, and where are they ? Gone !—perished ! and the place that hath seen them, shall know them no more. Who asks after the idle and unvalued leaves ? have they perished ? are they gone ? are they annihilated ? or have they been gathered to the fire ? So are these things to me, for the seed is not in *them*. They shall—yea, like a baseless vision, they shall dissolve, and leave not a wreck behind.”

She sighed again, and her melancholy eye slowly turned from that brilliant scene:—yes, passive as she seemed, there were many there, the loved, and the honoured, whom fain would she have snatched from the

fearful doom. She looked at her companion again, with a sort of imploring expression, as much as to say,

“Must all these perish? Nay—not all—surely there are those who will save some?”

He fixed his eye steadily upon hers for a short time; then withdrew it—and with a gentle smile he said:

“One wandering in the wilderness—marks and selects the balm-distilling plants and precious herbs—he culls them with a careful hand and places them in his bosom: when the wind of destruction passeth over, they are not found.”

Again she looked at him wistfully, again at the company; his eye followed hers, and fell upon Robert!

“That is as a rose of Sharon,” said he, “the wayfarer will not pass *him* by.”

Then he rose quietly from the place, and walking away, was soon lost in the crowd that closed around him.

She continued to sit in the same place, but her eye followed him anxiously; there was one question she had longed, yet dared not ask.

But her heart was full of it.

There sat that royal woman—there danced and fled by the gay stream of revellers; but her soul was in a dark and lonesome place.

There was one about to be cast into the dungeon, over whom all the terrors of the law were impending. A wise, pious, and accomplished man; and Grace Vaux turned sick at the contrast with the gay scene before her, and shuddered at the horrors of his probable fate.

But she had not ventured to ask a single question

from the gentleman in satin embroidered with gold and pearl; had not ventured even in the remotest manner to allude to the subject. There was something in the blue mild eye of that man, which she dreaded inconceivably: there was nothing on earth she dreaded so much as a reproof from him. He had commanded her to appear at this festival, and she, her heart bleeding silently within, had obeyed; and there she sat, the very image of patient suffering, watching the glittering crowd and listening to the loud clang of the music; but her very soul was sick with anguish.

By and by she saw the same gentleman appear at the other end of the hall. And well instructed as she was in many things of which the world in general was ignorant, her astonishment was excessive, to see him enter into conversation with the Earl of Essex; and upon terms, as it would appear, of old acquaintances.

She saw Essex introduce him to many of those around, and she thought her head must be dizzy, and her eyes dazzled, when she beheld him presented by the same hand, to Robert, Everard, young Winter, and several of his and her mutual friends.

She sighed, and cast her eyes in perplexity upon the ground.

Presently Robert was at her side again.

"Still here !" he said, "still fair and blessed one—obscured in a blaze of glory too dazzling for our feeble eyes. Why—why will *you* not condescend to mingle with lower beings, and do as others do ? See," he continued, with a look of meaning—"There is very good

company near the state. Mr. Darcy, of Northumberland ; I have been just introduced to him by the Earl of Essex himself."

"I thought I saw something of the sort," said she, with another sigh.

"He seems to be an accomplished cavalier, that Mr. Darcy," said Robert, with some little dissatisfaction in his tone of voice, "but men may be too accomplished to my taste. I prefer the daring of the lion to the wisdom of the serpent. What says the fairest Grace?"

"A pious end must justify the means," said she, while a slight colour passed over her pale cheek. "And what are we poor, cowardly sinners as we are—that we should judge a Daniel, even in the lions' den."

The colour flashed across Robert's face, and flew to his temples.

"Cowardly! the lady Grace says—the lady Grace thinks us cowardly," repeated he.

"Well, well ; time was, time is—"

"But Grace,"—turning to her again, and bending the full force of his deep melting brown eye upon her—"Grace, have you ever heard in your idle hours at Harroden, such things as old romances? Has Grace Vaux ever condescended to bend her eye upon such foolish tales? Have you?"

"Idleness all—" said the fair devotee.

"Did you never hear of what has been done—is done—may be done for the queen and idol of one's heart? Have you never learned that these charms, this wealth of beauty was given you for a purpose, Grace; for a high

purpose ? Know you not that there is one breathing upon this earth who would dare all that man dare—more than man dare—all that devils dare—at your bidding ?”

She shook her head, looked at him again, and sighed heavily.

“ I have been taught my duty,” she said ; “ but oh ! that you would place that jewel, your imperishable soul, under other and higher guidance than that of a weak and sinful worm like me. Oh ! Robert ! why do you come to me ?”

“ Because I adore you,” he cried, impetuously.

“ Hush, hush, I will not, cannot hear such words ;” and yet, as if constrained by some overruling power, though with visible reluctance, she still listened.

He went on little heeding her interruption : “ Because I hate and despise much that I see and that I ought to reverence and respect—and—”

“ Ah, blessed and holy martyrs ! And is it thus your pious sacrifices are regarded ? Is this the return for the stifling rope, the butcher’s knife, the devouring fire !” and she shuddered and turned deadly pale.

“ No,” said he, glancing again to the other end of the room ; “ *that* was not what I was thinking of.”

“ And would these or *that*,” said she, gravely following his eye as it rested upon Mr. Darcy, engaged in courteous communication with those around him.

“ Would these or *that* cost *you* most, Robert ?”

He was silenced.

“There *are* sacrifices,” continued the fair, but too sincere sophist, “which are to a brave man more than the sacrifice of life.”

And she turned her eye from the state full upon him.—At that very moment the Earl of Essex was presenting Mr. Darcy to Queen Elizabeth.

Robert and Grace Vaux exchanged glances of astonishment. Even the spirited young man felt as if there was something almost magnificent in the daring deceptions of Mr. Darcy. As he sat watching the insinuating air of politeness and calm dignity which that gentleman assumed, upon this his first interview with the mighty queen: as he marked the respectful deference of his manner, the reverential humility of his whole demeanour, and thought of.....

“What mean you, I say, to push yourselves in so horrible danger of body and soul, for a wicked woman! dismissed by the Vicar of Christ, her, and your, lawful judge—forsaken of God, who justifieth the sentence of his vicar—forsaken of all Catholic princes, whom she hath injured intolerably—forsaken of divers lords, knights, and gentlemen of England..... what will ye answer to the Pope’s lieutenant, when he shall charge you with the crime of doing suit and service to an heretical praetensed queen against Christ’s vicar?”

Words—which that very day, in secret conference, Robert had heard fall from the lips of Mr. Darcy.

There was that unhappily in the nature of Robert, which responded to every thing which was bold, daring, and desperate; duplicity in a moderate degree he would

have despised; but the immensity of the deceit hid from his conscience its meanness.

He looked on, wondering and admiring.

"His genius is really astonishing," at last he exclaimed turning his eyes from the group at the top of the hall, and again addressing his companion.

"Say rather his faith," replied she, with reverence.

Robert looked in a strange way: his countenance was far from being acquiescent in this last sentiment.

But now several of their mutual acquaintance, young gentlemen of fashion and breeding, came rushing down the room; the drums, trumpets, rebecks, and flutes, again struck up their loud symphony;—and there was a preparation for another dance.

"Come, Robert," cried young Winter, gaily: "find yourself a pair—I am to dance with Eleanor."

"Will you not dance, Grace Vaux?" said Francis, addressing her in his usual formal, composed manner. "Why do you choose to make yourself so singular? Every body dances but yourself? My lady, your mother would wish you to dance too?"

"How can I?" said she, looking more and more distressed,—“Oh, Francis, how can you ask me?"

"How can I ask you? And pray why should I not ask you?—I hope," said he, with meaning, "you do not refuse to dance because that would be imprudent indeed."

"But I have refused Robert."

"Never mind Robert.—It would be no penance, perhaps, to dance with him," said Francis:—"and I

know it can be no pleasure to dance with me. Try one cinque pace."

He spoke as one accustomed to be regarded—and the last argument was not without its weight with the fair ascetic. It was true she did distrust herself, and her inclinations pleaded too strongly when Robert was in question—with Francis there was no such weakness of inclination to be resisted; she gave him her hand; and executed the measure in a way that drew the eyes of the whole assembly upon her.

Robert, this time, refused to dance: he stood leaning against the wall, wrapt in a sort of ecstasy, as he watched her slowly moving among the rest: the lovely sedateness of her appearance still preserved—and the holy tranquillity of her brow still unruffled.

The queen, Essex, Mr. Darcy, all watched her.

The old queen asked who that fair creature was: "For methinks," said she, "it is some time since our court has been graced with so rare a pearl—Mrs. Bridges is an Ethiop in the comparison," she added, loud enough to be heard by the Earl of Essex; but not directing the remark to him. "May it be the daughter of the late Lord Vaux? if our memory deceive us not. We have not held the house of Vaux as among the closest of our friends, perchance; but we rejoice that the fair daughter of Harroden hath at length graced our court. She is dancing with that tall Tresham I think, whose father owes us no kindness... an evil conjunction! Methinks the fair lady might have chosen better."

"I assure your majesty," said Essex, bluntly, "that there are none you might more readily, if such were your pleasure, count among your real friends, than such as he. Those who are faithful in one thing, shall be found faithful in many. A hypocrite is an apple of Sodom—under any garb."

"Full of bitterness and ashes—think you so, Essex? Marry, you are a rare man for discerning of spirits."

"There are those who think nothing but experience can give discernment," said he, saucily.

The colour flashed into the queen's face.

"Marry, and if it do—it shall give authority likewise," said she. "And it shall court reverence too, from every malapert reasoner among you all."

Essex bowed with a kind of ironical smile, which seemed to say, to such reasoning there is no reply: and turning from the queen, addressed himself to Mr. Darcy, who had continued standing at no great distance from the state.

"And who is this new face? This Mr. Darcy, of the north, my Lord Essex is so thick with?" said the queen, addressing Robert Cecil, who, silent and pre-occupied as usual, had remained standing where he had first placed himself, close beside her.

"Nay, your most gracious majesty, I don't pretend to know all my Lord Essex's acquaintance—not I."

"He is marvellously given to strange company," remarked the queen.

Cecil shrugged his shoulders.

"But that seems a gallant gentleman, and is exceedingly well dressed and appointed," pursued the

royal critic. "Darcy, of the north! The Darcys were ever an honourable race..."

The eye of the secretary, sharp and scrutinising, was fixed upon the person in question; but he made no answer; and presently a rush of a party of gallants separated Mr. Darcy from Lord Essex. Cecil lost sight of him for a moment, and he never during the evening observed him again.

Essex, out of humour and sulky, as he was too apt to be at the slightest contradiction, remained standing at a little distance from the queen.

She was piqued, and signing him to come up to her, said:

"It is reported, that my Lord of Essex keeps choice company, it gives a friend pleasure to hear it."

"My Lord of Essex selects his company to please himself, not his back friends," said he, bluntly.

"Flatterers are the most dangerous of UN-friends," said his monitress and mistress, who loved to school him.

"And if five-and-thirty years have not taught wisdom, neither shall stripes on the back of a fool,"—was his answer.

"Thou speakest but the truth," said the queen, with a certain sadness in her tone. "Vain are stripes, and vain the idle breath of words. He of whom the stars in their ascendant marked out the fiery course, how shall the poor hand of a clay-built creature stay Phaeton—I think it was they named thee at thy baptism—was it not, Essex?"

"Titan—rather," dropped in a whisper from Cecil.

"Parmenio—" said Essex, with feeling.

The queen continued the war of words no longer: her heart—placable and forgiving, and but too susceptible for her peace—melted at the tone in which the last word was uttered, and the petulance of the favourite was in a moment forgiven.

In the meantime the dance in which Grace Vaux had taken a part was ended; and no longer retreating to the further end of the apartment, she was led by Francis to the place where Evelyn sat, who, rising with an air of much delight, greeted her and made room for her by her side.

Eleanor was already occupying the other end of the low bench on which she was seated—and of the three fair girls now sitting together it would be difficult to say which was the most lovely.

“I was so much pleased to see you dance at last,” said Evelyn, affectionately taking the hand of Grace in her own, “I was afraid you were ill or unhappy, sitting there so far from us all. I was so glad to see you dance.”

“Were you?” said the other, quietly, “then I could almost be glad I did dance: but you know I do not like dancing. I merely trod a measure to avoid the persecution of Francis, who you know is used to carry things all his own way.”

Francis had walked away apparently as indifferent, now he had accomplished his purpose, as she could be herself. He went and stood by Eleanor, who was looking at Grace with a strange kind of dubious expression.

“I got her to dance at length,” said he, “though she

had refused Robert repeatedly. And I suppose I shall have Robert's sword through my body for my pains."

Robert had by this time left the wall against which he had leaned. He came up to the bench which the young ladies were occupying.

The eye of Eleanor followed him, but that of the fair Grace continued bent upon the ground; Eleanor watched them anxiously. Would he be piqued and offended? Would he forsake the cold indifferent, as he had once before that evening done?

No!—

Not one syllable, not one look for any one but her.

He drew a stool and sat down by her side; she did not even turn her eyes towards him.

"It is to no purpose," he said at last, in a low but resolute voice. "You think perhaps to drive me from your side by this severity, to offend my pride as much as you wound my heart by this preference of another. No, Grace; you cannot deceive me. You do not; you cannot prefer Francis to me—I defy you. I have loved—I do love, you best know how deeply; in life in death I am yours, and I know you to be mine deny me, defy me as you will, cruel Grace."

"It is you that are cruel," said she, gently, "I thought *you* would have saved me from this persecution. *You* know how bitter are all these things to me this night but you are still the same that you ever were: persecuting, careless, and unkind. Even *this* night you will not leave me in peace—you are without pity, Robert."

It was said in so very low a tone that no one but

himself, as he leaned anxiously forward to catch what she said, could hear it—and having said it, she turned away from him and began to talk of quite indifferent things to Evelyn, carefully avoiding the slightest allusion to the secret cause for sorrow which she had glanced at to him.

He did not look offended—far less jealous—far less was he inclined to resent her unkindness by giving his attention to another ; he continued to sit in his usual persevering determined manner by her.

He appeared to have made up his mind to adore her in spite of all her coldness, and seemed almost contented with the mere pleasure of gazing at her—as in her serious way she talked to Evelyn and to Everard.

The brow of the fair Eleanor darkened, and she could scarcely smother a sigh ; but she turned to Francis and Winter, and began to laugh and talk.

“ Did you ever see any thing so determined,” said Winter to Francis, “ as his devotion to Grace Vaux ? He, whom we both remember such a wild roisterer, such a daring despiser of Dan Cupid and all his toils—to be snared in this fashion ! ”

“ You and I think differently of Robert,” said Francis. “ But I do not pretend to understand him, and there is not quite so much love lost between him and me, as between you and him, Winter.”

“ Oh ! ” said Winter, “ he is my *friend*.”

“ That means much, does it ? ” said Eleanor. “ I have heard people call one another friend so lightly, that for my part, I am no greater a believer in friendship, than I am in love.”

“ You not believe in love—the beautiful Eleanor

whom all men worship not believe in love?" cried Francis and Winter at a breath.

"Idle words—mere breath," said she carelessly; and as if wearied by their attentions, she turned round, and again caught the eye of Robert fixed upon the lovely Grace with such a deep and fervent expression!

The heart of poor Eleanor fluttered and faltered sadly. She could not bear to believe it; she could not endure the conviction that the coldness and severity of Grace would not suffice, as it once seemed to have done during that evening, to drive Robert from her side.

But he had taken his resolution while leaning against the wall, following her as she glided gently through the dance. He had made up his mind with much of the devotion of a knight of chivalry—that, cruel or relenting, nothing should drive him from her service.

He was one who, intent upon his purpose, disregarded all minor considerations, and was accustomed to cling to his resolution in defiance of all the world. There passed in his heart at that time a secret vow—to devote his whole being to her. He was as yet a stranger to any other of those raging passions which might have served as a diversion to this. As yet the fanatical devotion to a sect or a party had not taken possession of his mind; the sort of wild excitement in which he had passed his youth had not yet altogether subsided; but his character was about to undergo a change, and the form his passion for Grace Vaux was taking, might be regarded only as a sort of earnest of what his other passions would in time become.

Everard had prayed of Evelyn to dance yet another

dance with him—she had risen; Eleanor had accepted the hand of Tresham, and thus Grace and Robert were again left to themselves. The music was so loud that it was impossible for any one to overhear what was said. It was but very seldom that such opportunities presented themselves: he left the stool on which he had been sitting, and took the seat by her side in disregard of a sort of imploring look which she cast upon him: but there is an unerring instinct in these matters—he felt that it asked him to desist from his importunities, but it spoke rather of self-distrust than of repugnance.

In spite of all her apparent coldness, the heart of the sweet votary trembled as he placed himself again by her side, and in a low earnest voice, rapidly reiterated:

“Tell me—tell me, Grace—once for all tell me why you hate me?”

“Have I any cause to love you?” said she, gravely, “one who has such ways—holds such sentiments as you do—why should I? How should I love that which my whole soul disapproves and abhors?”

“You speak of my past life,” said he. “Is that what you mean to allude to? You think me perhaps a desperate and irreligious man—so I was once—so perchance I might still have been had I never known you, Grace. But all this is changed with me—I am become another being, you know that I am. Why reproach me with the past?”

“You know, Robert,” said she, gravely, “that I rejoice in that change—but”

“There are other changes you would say. What! have you not suspected them? We kneel at the same

altar now, Grace. Would you have more?—Take more—I have been reconciled by Mr. Darcy—”

She started, and looked round terrified at his boldness: but there was no one there to listen; the dangerous confidence was safe.

“Has he? Oh! Robert, has he?—blessed and righteous missionary of Heaven!” She spoke, and the tears swelled into her beautiful eyes; not one drop, however, fell upon her cheek. Robert gazed in a sort of ecstasy at this demonstration of feeling.

“At least then, you care for my everlasting soul’s health, Grace,” he said.

“The holy Virgin Mother forbid, that the redemption of any poor lost and perishing soul should be indifferent to me!”

“Is that all you will say?—Is that all I can wring from your cold, insensible heart?” said he, with some impatience and bitterness. “I had thought—I had hoped—linked together in one sentiment—”

“Surely you did not think of such a woman as I am in that awful moment! Nay, Robert, you had not such impiety in your heart.”

He gazed at the sweet moralist; there was something ineffably tender in the expression of his eye and his tone of voice, as he said—

“It is vain to parley with you—you are an angel; and I am the most darkened and corrupted of the sinners that deform this miserable earth. But what matters it, angel as thou art; I must and I will adore thee! In adoring thee, I adore that Heaven which speaks through those eyes and in that voice. Impiety

didst thou say? I deny it. If I mingled the saints and angels in my thoughts, as I took that step which was to lead me to their habitations—if I thought of thee!—call it impiety if thou wilt. I own the impeachment and repent it not. Others may have their tutelary saints, but thou alone art mine; others their guardian angels, thou art mine; others adore the Queen of Heaven, but thou art the type of that divine one to me. Do what you will—say what you will—this is the faith to which I was reconciled. I ask for no other.—I am thine; do with me what thou wilt, for I am thine.”

She answered not; she sat musing.

And now she began first to understand some of her life's past history. She began to comprehend the aim of Mr. Darcy in his injunctions—the reason of the almost stern command imposed upon her, to leave that religious solitude in which she loved to dwell, to mingle in the world, and to receive without too great impatience the service proffered by Robert. Commands to which she had submitted with extreme reluctance; but which she dared not and could not resist, for secret reasons known only to them both.

She began to understand the vocation to which she was called; and sighing gently but without her usual sadness, she said:

“I have always told you how my heart shudders at this profane and desperate way of talking to me. Have done with such words I pray you, Robert—if for the sake of nothing higher—let it be for my sake.”

“I will never offend again,” he said, submissively, charmed by her gentleness into softer feelings than

usual. "Only acknowledge, sweetest Grace, that this which I have told you of myself does not altogether displease you."

"What has passed," said she with composure, "consoles and reassures me. Shall I tell you, Robert, that I have sorrowed over your impenitence? Ask me not whether I joy at your reconciliation. Mayest thou but tread *her* holy courts as a good and faithful soldier of the Church, perilling life, if it must be so, in the righteous cause. That shall be my heart's prayer for thee, Robert."

And then there was a deep silence between them.

Suddenly she exclaimed,

"Ah me! could I have thought it possible that my heart would have been beguiled from sadness on this sorrowful night? Woe's me! a thoughtless, careless sinner!"

"How so?" said he, somewhat surprised.

"You are in *his* confidence now," said she; "know you not what has happened?"

"I have heard a rumour of ill news."

"Alas! alas! he that was more than my father upon earth; he who first carried the banner of the Church into this lost and benighted land—the brave, the wise, the venerable . . . he who called so many from darkness into the wonderful light! . . . The evil news reached me, even while these miserable ornaments were being hung upon me! I was dressing myself for this pitiless woman's feast of gladness, when he was quivering and shuddering under the iron grasp of her implacable laws."

They both looked round suspicious and fearful, as she uttered this.

“Ask me no more,” she said; “how dare I betray my trust, and break *his* commands? He commanded me not to speak of this. I have erred and spoken of it to thee—*Mea culpa!*—*mea culpa!*”

There was a look of rapturous delight in the eyes of her lover, as with a face yet paler than usual, she struck her bosom with her small clenched hand as she said this; and rising, removed further from him on the bench, as if guilty of some deadly sin.

He did not attempt to follow her, but rose and again strolled up and down the room.

In the meantime Everard and the sweet Evelyn had danced once more together, and were now sitting engaged in pleasant converse, and insensible to all else that was going on.

There seemed to be a sympathy in their natures which attracted them insensibly to each other. They were indeed, very much unlike the rest of their companions; there was an ingenuous truth—a simplicity, a repose—about both of their countenances which was very remarkable among those too often marked with sullen discontent, suspicion, violence, or a kind of ambiguous softness still more disagreeable.

The anxious father stood at some distance gazing intently upon his child. He seemed endeavouring to peruse in his handsome features the character of the young gentleman who occupied so much of her attention.

He knew him little, though this was not the first time they had met. They had occasionally been in

company at Harroden Magna, the seat of the Catholic family of Lord Vaux. Rarely—it is true; for Mr. Mulsho being, as has been said, a moderate Catholic of the old school, was not held in much esteem by those now converted to the new and dangerous opinions in circulation. Neither did he desire for his daughter any very close intimacy with those whose factious violence he deprecated; though of the extent to which their designs were in secret carried, he was kept in profound ignorance.

The disposal of his daughter in marriage in these difficult times, was the daily subject of his anxiety. He desired to place her under the protection of some man whose opinions were as moderate as his own; but how could he find such a one in days such as these?

She looked so serenely, so perfectly happy at this moment, that the father's heart, in spite of all his anxious forebodings of the future, could not but share in her joy.

In the meantime the smiles of the unhappy Eleanor had been exchanged for an expression of the most grievous dissatisfaction, as relinquishing the hand of her cavalier, she stole up to her brother, for Everard was her brother, and sat down by his side.

He looked round and observing her fallen expression of countenance, said very kindly, for he was kindness itself :

“What ails my Eleanor? She looks weary and pale—nay, sweet heart! you are ever the first to begin and the last to leave off dancing—something more than common has happened, or you would not look so weary—what is it, my sister?”

“What is it, sweet Eleanor,” said Evelyn, leaning forward and speaking with her usual kind tone of voice; “there, try this pouncet box—you look pale and faint, fair Eleanor.”

“You are very kind—thank you—I pray your pardon! I believe I am not quite well. It is nothing, it will soon pass away.”

She saw the beautiful Grace rise to leave the room with her mother; and Robert, with several other young gentlemen, in a kind of duteous attendance, following her. But they only accompanied her to her coach—they all returned again to the hall.

And now Robert came up to the place where they were sitting, and placing himself by Eleanor—it was now her turn. He was happy—he was overpowered with happiness; he, so wild and careless, was for the moment serious and still; he had seen the faint blush colour her cheek as he had taken her hand to lead her from the apartment. It was enough—he asked no more: he came and sat by Eleanor and Everard whom he loved with great affection, to enjoy his satisfaction in silence.

There was a perfect understanding existing between these three young persons, so far as their religion went, a matter at that time of such moment in all domestic relations; each of them had been reared in the profession of the Protestant faith, from which, by the exertions of Mr. Darcy, they had been rescued (as he would have called it), and had all been *reconciled* together.

The reconciliation, however, conducted as it was by Mr. Darcy—who it is proper to inform the reader, was

at that time the provincial or superior of the Jesuits in England—implied much more than a mere return to the Catholic religion: he had the art to mix up many doctrines of ultramontane tendency (and with which, strictly speaking, religion had nothing to do) with his instructions—and to make use of the generous ardour with which the heart of the young clings to the oppressed and fallen, to infuse feelings the most pernicious and dangerous:—but of this hereafter.

The sort of communion of feeling which this event had produced among them had endeared them greatly to each other; and had unhappily fostered in the too susceptible heart of Eleanor the seeds of that passion which was destroying her peace.

Evelyn was altogether without the pale of these secret understandings. She had not the slightest suspicion of the existence even of such intrigues; and this artless simplicity was beyond measure charming to Everard, naturally of a character as ingenuous as her own.

Robert talked with Eleanor with all the affectionate freedom of a brother, which she, too apt to deceive herself, mistook for a deeper and tenderer partiality. And as she pursued her way home with her brother, sunk into the corner of one of those splendid coaches which were by this time almost in general use among men of fortune—she indulged in dreams of felicity, the dangerous delight of those who have never been schooled to the duty of watchfulness and internal self-discipline.

Evelyn and her father rode home, engaged in that cheerful conversation which was usually maintained between them.

Father and mother in one, his constant and unremitting efforts had been directed to improve her understanding, and to strengthen her character; preparing her to meet what might result from that dark and threatening future which lay before them all.

Days, in which little children had talked of martyrdom as of a familiar thing, were not yet forgotten; and every man of forethought, now that the years of the hoary old queen were evidently approaching to a close, looked forward with solicitude to what was next to ensue.

Mr. Mulsho had accustomed his daughter to the most perfect and unreserved confidence.

Evelyn, content of heart, and as yet in the dawn of that passion whose mid-day hour is too often so troubled and so stormy, prattled away upon all that she had seen and observed; while her father, from time to time, made his remarks, correcting her more rash and hasty impressions.

CHAPTER III.

“ Create and rule a world, and work upon
Mankind by secret engines.”

ELEANOR, exhausted with agitating passions, went up to her chamber ; tore off hastily all her splendid ornaments; and sinking upon her couch of down, was asleep before her attendants had left the apartment.

Evelyn consigned herself to the care of an ancient lady who officiated as a sort of half aunt, half governess, half duenna, in the family of Mr. Mulsho. Mrs. Maude was sitting up expecting her, accompanied by two serving gentlewomen, as they might be called—almost of the rank of gentlewomen, indeed they were ; for with the forms of most respectful attendance was this young lady, the heiress of Goddeshurst, and all its broad lands, received upon returning to her father's house.

Her bed-chamber was arranged with the greatest luxury, the rich curtains of the bed fell in heavy velvet folds upon the floor, the bed itself being covered with a fine white satin coverlet fringed with gold. A large dressing-table was set out, displaying the preparations for the toilette, and adorned with several pieces of fine gold filigree work; gold and silver boxes and vases, and rich cups of crimson and blue Venice glass stood on each side of a mirror, in a frame of silver elaborately worked;

silver lamps were burning on each side of the apartment. Every thing was costly and beautiful—and yet, it was in accordance simply with the fashion of the times, that all this was arranged: it was the result of a certain style, due to her rank in society, rather than as a matter of selfish luxury, that this was done for Evelyn.

Neither Mr. Mulsho nor his daughter loved luxury or show; it was a habit of their life and times which passed without consideration. It was nothing more.

Good Mrs. Maude received her precious charge in the hall as she entered—the two duennas standing like maids of honour at some little distance behind; the large cloak in which she had been wrapped fell from her as her father carefully unclasped it, gazing with a father's delight for ever new, upon her lovely face and form; but he gave no expression to the admiration he felt; such a proceeding would have been quite inconsistent with the gravity of a father in those days. Evelyn dropped upon one knee, kissed her father's hand—received his blessing—and then consigned to Mrs. Maude, was carried away to her bed-chamber, there to spend the time, while her attendants were busily employed upon her night toilette, in relating all the wonders of that gorgeous scene at which she had been present for the first time of her life.

And how was the still more delicate—the still more graceful—the still more beautiful Grace Vaux, received as she entered the house of her fathers that night.

In the days of Queen Elizabeth the Strand, as a street,

did not exist ; from Temple Bar to the wide extended precincts of what was called the Old Palace of Westminster, a line of grand but detached houses stood upon the banks of the river, at some furlongs' distance from the water. They were all surrounded by large gardens which were carried to the river's brink, and were laid out with much of the quaint magnificence of those days in such matters.

Among these was one which history has for ever rendered memorable ; namely, Essex House—but this is not that to which I am at present going to conduct you.

The one you are about to enter is a large gloomy looking mansion of very great antiquity, built of timber and clay ; what we commonly call black and white houses, with which style of architecture all are perfectly well acquainted, specimens still existing of it all over the country.

The house of which we are thinking was a very fine example of the style in question ; at least so far as extent of front and innumerable peaks and gables went ; but it was more than usually heavy and gloomy.

The stories overhung each other so that the lower windows were completely cast into shadow by the huge projecting beams above ; the ground-floor apartments being thus rendered so dark, that it was twilight within even in the glare of mid-day :—as the stories rose one above another, the aspect of things became somewhat more cheerful. A long gallery or receiving-room upon the highest floor extended the whole length of the house, and its line of rich lattice windows looked out upon the Thames ;

but the story below this was very heavy and gloomy. A very large low irregularly shaped ante-room occupied at this floor the centre of the mansion, lined with a wainscoting of oak, which time had rendered nearly as dark as ebony. Out of this several very small chambers equally gloomy and dark opened; some serving as the sleeping apartments of the members of this family—the rest wrapt in a sort of mysterious solitude and silence, which was oppressive to the spirits and imagination.

It was into the large court of this gloomy abode that the coach of the Lady Vaux turned ; and here, gliding like some white spirit amid the realms of darkness, the beautiful Grace, taking a small plain iron lamp from the aged serving-man who opened the door, after having made a formal reverence to her mother, began to mount the dark stairs of chestnut, which led to the gloomy gallery above. Staircase followed staircase and gallery gallery—all seeming, however, darker, more low, and more gloomy one than the other—till she reached the ante-chamber upon the higher floor ; and turning an outer key that stood in the lock, entered unattended, her small and dismal chamber. The walls of this, like those of the other apartments, were wainscoted with dark panelled oak, against which hung some pictures of saints, in black ebony frames ; a few chairs of oak without cushion or covering ; a table without carpet or velvet overlaying it—perfectly bare ; with only a few books in black covers, arranged around. Such was the furniture of the room. At one end of it there was a door, now standing open, which led into the cell, rather than chamber, where was a narrow uncurtained

bed, with its one mattress, and scanty covering, formed as nearly as possible upon the model of those of the strictest conventual orders. Opposite to this door, a panel, so exactly fitted to the wainscot that when closed its existence escaped observation, stood open; and lighted by two immense wax-candles which were placed on either side, displayed an immense black crucifix. The agonising figure of the blessed Saviour of Catholic and heretic alike, was here represented larger than life; in wood so excessively darkened and discoloured by age, that it had the appearance of bronze; the terrors of that dreadful hour were represented with a truth almost harrowing, in the writhing limbs, and by the dark hue of the drooping head and face.

At the foot of this crucifix a very aged woman, attired in deep black was kneeling;—she had on a small white tippet, and a black veil and hood encircled her face, not suffering one lock of her silver hair to become visible : her rosary of plain ebony in her hand, she was repeating prayers which might have appeared mechanical, had not the deep devotion of her whole air and manner rendered them affecting and impressive.

The aged nun, for a very aged nun she was—a last relic of those religious societies which the rage for innovation of Henry, and his minister Cromwell, had abolished—had, when driven from her convent, received shelter in the family of the Lord Vaux ; and had from that time lived there secluded, and as much according to the severe rule of her order as circumstances would allow.

She was praying with such deep devotion, and was so

entirely absorbed in what she was about, that she did not hear the door open, nor perceive the entrance of the Lady Grace: who, presenting a strange contrast to the gloomy scene, arrayed as she was in her rich white dress, and sparkling jewels, came forward silently, and began to take off her ornaments, and cast them with something which was more than disdainful indifference—with a sort of disgust—upon the bare oaken table before her.

Her robes of white satin fell upon the ground, displaying the extraordinary simplicity of her attire or under-dress beneath. No point, no needlework adorned her. She cast hastily aside the vestments of ceremony assumed for the occasion, as if she were impatient to be rid of such offensive vanities, and covered herself with a white wrapping-gown of the most rigid simplicity, and having done so, sat down upon a bare oaken bench which occupied one side of the wall, waiting till the orisons of the nun should have terminated.

The ancient woman rose from her knees, and turned her withered face and dimmed eye upon the young lady. The face was paler than usual, pale as it ever was; and in the eye spoke an expression of grief and horror not to be mistaken. The young lady clasped her hands with a look of agony.

Neither of them spoke, but a gesture of the old nun's head said: "It is too true!"

The young lady gave a low groan, then she lifted up her clasped hands before her eyes, and the tears trickled slowly through her fingers.

She wept some time in this quiet manner, her tears falling like the still summer rain; and then she slowly let her hands sink upon her lap, and speaking with her usual gentle composure, she said:

“And how did you hear it?”

“Father Tesmond was here to-night. He came by command of Mr. Darcy to give you the intelligence.”

“Is Father Tesmond still here?”

“No—he is departed for Staffordshire for Henlip, the seat of the Abingdons, under their protection to remain concealed till this storm is blown over. There were two more priests arrested with the holy man; there are doubts as to their steadfastness in resisting the terrible rack. Mr. Darcy has given orders, therefore, that till such time as the result of this business can be ascertained, the holy missionaries shall remain concealed in their different asylums among the devout Catholic gentry. He himself, with his known courage, ventured to appear at the festival to-night; but he mounted and rode north, as soon as he had changed his attire. It is his command to us both that we remain quietly here, engaged in such fasting, humiliation, and prayer, as may move the saints to intercession for him who lieth grinding in the prison-house. . . . This is what Father Tesmond had charge from him to say.”

She had listened without moving a feature. Then she stepped up close to Mother Anne, and said, in a trembling voice,

“Did he say nothing more? Did he not say for what they would be arraigned? For a misdemeanour,

or for . . . " her lips growing white with the supposition.

"For treason," said the nun, her countenance assuming a hue almost as dark as that of the crucifix she had quitted.

The young lady cast her eyes with a half-appealing, half-reproachful expression upwards. A slight, almost imperceptible shiver shook her frame. Then she retired into the little cell where stood her bed. She disrobed herself even of the simple dress she wore, as far too delicate an indulgence under her present feelings; and assumed a clothing adopted to those ceremonies of penance, which it was the practice of the rigid Catholics of that day to adopt in moments of distress and terror such as these. She then passed that night, which those two other young creatures spent in peaceful slumber, in all the horrors of self-imposed penance; wrestling and struggling in heart-rending supplication, and almost hopeless prayer.

The penance was agonising, the prayer despairing and hopeless, and wherefore?

Because, in spite of all, even in this moment of horror-struck agitation, one image would suddenly start up and cross her imagination—one image send a thrill of impious pleasure, as she thought it, through her heart.

It was not that he was reconciled.

That would have been a pious and permitted joy. To rejoice that one other was gathered into the sacred fold—to rejoice even unto tears—this would have been a sentiment, which even in the depths of penitential devotion might not have been disallowed.

But why would that dark mysterious eye of passion still rest upon her memory till her very heart thrilled? And why would the demon whisper amid her prayers, what if they, too, were never to be severed?—what if she might be to him, as that lamented and revered being had been to her ; his monitor—his guide? . . .

Oh, why should kind nature's consolations in this hour of sorrow whisper to her heart in vain ; why, alas ! was she impelled to reject with dread the tender consolation, as if it were an unpardonable sin ?

In such struggles—in such agonies of conflicting feelings, this lovely creature strove and suffered till day.

CHAPTER IV.

“What’s the matter,
That you unlace your reputation thus,
And spend your rich opinion for the name
Of a night brawler?”

Othello.

SUCH were the different ways in which those three fair young creatures passed the night.

How did some of the rest of the party wear out the remaining hours?

Robert, Thomas, and Winter, with several other young gallants of their age, left the palace arm-in-arm, and wrapped in their cloaks, their swords by their sides, their hats and pendent feathers down over their faces, walked up what is now Whitehall.

They were characters far too wild and irregular to suffer their spirits to subside into tranquillity at their own chambers, after a few hours of so much excitement; Robert, in particular, was dizzy with a sort of wild hope, which the adventures of the evening had raised; and—as was always the case, at that period of his life, with him—whenever any circumstance had occurred to elevate his spirits he was as one intoxicated, appeared quite incapable of self-government, and was accustomed to dissipate his feelings in any extravagance that might first present itself.

“What has night to do with sleep?” was something of

the sentiment with which he passed up the street, exciting his companions by his example to the perpetration of a thousand capricious pranks that would be considered unpardonable in these our more sober and well-regulated days.

They passed on till they came to a large tavern in the vicinity of St. Clement's Church, much frequented by the young Catholic gentlemen, and where wine and dice at all hours of the day and night were to be had.

Most of the party had before this time dispersed their several ways; Robert, Thomas, and Winter were alone when they entered the large, low room, still full of company, where wine was circulating freely; the loud catch was being trolled at some tables; and the loud rattle of the dice echoing from others.

"Hallo, mine host! a bottle of sack here," cried Robert, throwing himself down by one of the tables, taking off his sword and unclasping his rich cloak. "Come, Tom, off with that heavy pensioner's cap of thine. Winter, a chair there, let us make a night of it."

"Who have we here?" said Thomas, standing erect several inches taller than any other man in the room, and surveying the apartment with a sort of suspicious, scrutinising glance, "half of them are unknown to me."

"And if they be, man—we are not coming here to hatch treason against our most *legitimate* queen, are we?—but against those unpardonable criminals—those murderers of human enjoyment—sleep, good hours, good order, good manners, and so forth. What

art thou afraid of, man? None but friends frequent this loyal house; Old Gregory knows better, and is better known, than to harbour any but brave gallants of the party. But who have we here? Ah, Lyttleton!—Ah, Wright!—shaking the dice box, are ye both—what's the main? Nay, and if Lyttleton refuses your challenge, I'm your man—more sack—a bottle of Malvoisie—and fifty ducats to one on the next throw against thee. Lyttleton, for thou art not fortune's minion."

Lyttleton looked up, smiled, and shook his corner.

"I take you," said a gentleman of the name of Keyes, who was standing over the table watching the game between Lyttleton and Wright. "Fifty to one against Lyttleton."

"A somewhat heavy venture upon Wright's ugly face," said Winter, in his quiet way. "What are you about, Robert?"

"Nay," said Robert, carelessly, "it is done—have at it,"—and Wright threw aces.

His countenance changed not a whit: he threw the money to Keyes, and turning to Winter, said, "I'll hold you a hundred to five on Wright's next throw."

"Not I," said Winter, "I neither love to rob my friends nor be robbed myself—why, Robert, thou must have found the gold mines they tell us of . . . thou'rt mighty free with thy ducats to-night."

The only answer was hastily to write a promise for five hundred, throw it upon the table, and challenge any one to stake to the odds of five hundred to one against his own.

Wright took it; he threw, and won.

Then Lyttleton rose from the table, and Robert sat down, and the wine circulated rapidly, and the dice rattled, and eyes were sparkling and cheeks flushing, and voices rising into an excited clamour.

Robert was playing in the most desperate manner; rattling his dice, betting with all around, swallowing bumper after bumper of strong wine; his eyes flashing, speaking at the top of his voice, the most excited of the excited group which surrounded the table—which was indeed now the only table occupied in the room.

The night was far advanced, and the other guests had in small parties gradually retired, all save a gentleman dressed in a dark riding suit, who, a news-letter in his hand, which he held so as entirely to shade his face, sat reading by a small lamp in a very remote and obscure corner of the apartment.

Robert was losing, and in the desperation of defeat was doubling, trebling, and quadrupling his stakes against Wright, who, his clumsy, heavy countenance fixed in deep attention, was calculating his chances, and accumulating his gains. Robert, with one hand raised above his head, was rattling the box with fury, while with the other he held a bumper of sparkling wine, which he was pledging to the fairest she on earth.

When a hand was laid upon his shoulder. He turned his face suddenly upwards.

“Who dares? You!—Mr. Darcy!”

“I,” said the stranger. “Mr. Darcy. Is this a time, gentlemen—is this a time?”

"And why not?" cried Robert, with a dauntless air—"why not?—What better time?"

*'Catch the minutes as you may,
Life flies fast and wears away.'*

"What better time?—what have we else to do—Field of enterprise there is none—hope of glory there is none—hope of vengeance there is none—let us drink oblivion, and fight with these stamped bones."

And so saying, he flung the dice upon the table, and lost 1000 ducats at the throw.

Mr. Darcy allowed Wright quietly to add the note-of-hand which followed to his other winnings, and then said:

"Gentlemen, you are not, perhaps, aware, that a head—the value of whose lightest hair outweighs the worth of all present here, not excepting myself—is in jeopardy at this very hour; which it pleases you to spend in this noisy revelry. You do not, perhaps, know that," in a sort of whisper, yet so distinct as to be heard by every young man at the table, but which reached no further, "the retreat of the Father Provincial has been discovered, and that he is arrested."

There was a sudden start; every one fell back, looked aghast, and every eye was lifted to the speaker.

"Gentlemen," he continued, "my duty requires that I should ride north to-night; on me, henceforth, devolves the authority till now so far more worthily wielded by him whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. My duties are now extended—on my head devolves the conduct of that noble cause to which ye, all gallant

and generous spirits, have devoted yourselves. The contest against this foul woman and her iniquitous government is committed to me. Gentlemen, the obedience which no merits of my own entitle me to claim, I demand in the name of that holy church of which I am the most unworthy servant. Let us have done with dice and wine, for this is a terrible night."

The glasses and the cornets in every hand sank as by enchantment on the table, and every head was bowed in an attitude of respectful attention.

"Three words, gentlemen, only:—My intelligence has it that the sheriffs' officers are bringing up their prisoners by night, for reasons best known to themselves. The darkness is long at this time of year; it is now two hours past midnight," looking at an old Dutch clock that ticked loudly in one corner of the room. "The day dawns at seven—there is no moon, and the stars are muffled. The road towards St. John's Wood lies over the fields before you Visors most gentlemen possess; rapiers and poignards you none of you are in want of. Examples have we heard, where princes have amused themselves with cutting travellers' purses. Gallants of the present day may perhaps engage in a somewhat more perilous, and somewhat more noble enterprise. It were easy for two or three gentlemen, having secured their object, to dismount and return to their lodgings on foot; the others might gallop their horses towards Erith, where the boat is always ready, and opposite to which the small ship is lying. And thus the victim of a barbarous, tyrannical and heretical government might be torn from the fangs of the harpies of law, and escape to France."

They scarcely gave him time to conclude his speech. Every gentleman had risen hastily from his seat; they passed to the table where their swords were lying, and began in silence to buckle them on, assuming their cloaks, and pressing to leave the room without a word more.

“Tarry a little,” said Mr. Darcy, laying his soft white hands on the shoulders of two of the party. “I am sorry for you, sir,” . . . resting his blue eye upon Thomas, “and I am sorry for you, sir,” doing the same by Winter. “One, pardon me, is too well known, and too remarkable by his height and bearing . . . for the other there is a different task prepared. *Your* courage and spirit alone,” turning to Robert, “is sufficient to animate a party far less brave and gallant than the one confided to you. Gentlemen; behold your leader—you will be pleased to consider him as invested with my authority. . . . I need not remind those who possess horse pistols, that in the darkness of a night like this, they may be found more useful than swords—and once more,” in a lower voice, “that every queen’s officer is to be regarded in the light of a sworn and uncompromising enemy.”

“Come, gentlemen,” addressing Thomas and Winter, “shall we walk? My nag is eating his beans not far off—will you not see me to horse?”

The two gentlemen shrugged their shoulders, cast a rueful glance at their companions, but followed Mr. Darcy with an air of submission, and quitted the room as if impelled by a force against which resistance or remonstrance was equally vain.

“We meet at the windmill in the fields by the Piccadilly,” was Robert’s brief order: “the word—Faith and Justice. There is no time for delay; when Paul’s clock rings three, such of us as are ready, start; two or three, with a dark night and good pistols, will beat the sheriff and his merry men.—Farewell, gentlemen, till three by Paul’s,” and with a general salute he left the room, which was speedily cleared of the rest of the company.

The night was pitchy dark, as the several gentlemen, having hastily thrown off their rich dresses, and assumed the riding costume proper to people of the ordinary sort, mounted their heavy powerful horses, and with their huge horse pistols in their holsters, and swords by their sides, somewhat more effective than the rapiers they used when in full dress, rode swiftly down the lanes, and through the fields then occupying what is now covered by the labyrinth of streets and squares north of Piccadilly.

Robert was first at the place of rendezvous, and sat silent upon his large black horse, listening for the approach of the others; his heart would have been highly elated with the excitement of a fray of this sort at any time, but now he was animated by a kind of rapturous ecstasy which would have led him to beard the very lion in his den. He thought of her, that angel of his adoration; of the emotion she had shown—the deep bitter emotion which her countenance had expressed, when she had alluded to the subject of this

intended rescue; and it would be impossible to express the sort of delirious pleasure with which he dwelt upon the moment, when, in one of those secret meetings which the circumstances of the times so often rendered necessary among those of his faith, he should tell her, that her revered and beloved spiritual father was saved, and should claim and receive from that fair saint in return, a smile, or a syllable of approbation.

Under the pressure of such thoughts he paced his steed up and down, impatiently listening to the stilly hum of the drowsy city; and to the clocks of the different churches as they rang the quarters on the bell. At last the plashing of horses through the deep miry lane, and the jingling of bridles was distinctly heard; and one by one, through the almost palpable obscure, the moving forms were dimly descried as they advanced, and the words "Faith and Justice," were passed from one to the other.

"Silence and forward," said Robert, in a voice of command—and they took the road leading towards St. John's Wood, where they expected to arrive in time to waylay the cavalcade; and, sheltered by the thicket, to attack the escort and carry off the prisoners.

St. John's Wood was then a portion of the primeval forest still unreclaimed, which yet surrounded London on that side; and which stretched far and wide over hills and valleys, now covered with gardens, villas, and fields. Its thickets served for concealment to many an outlaw from society, and was usually the harbour first sought by those who, pursued for civil or political offences, fled from the city to escape the hands of justice.

The tall oaks overhung an almost impenetrable labyrinth of underwood, composed of hollies, willows, hazels, and trees of inferior growth, mingled in almost inextricable confusion, through which the great road from the north-western part of the country was cut.

The Catholic gentlemen posted themselves in a thicket close by the road side; and, by the very faint light of a few stars which just then became visible, watched the long line of road that stretched through the wood before them.

They had not long to wait. The sound of an advancing cavalcade was heard slowly descending a hill at some little distance, plashing through a brook that traversed a narrow valley; and then ascending leisurely the bank on the side of which the rescuers had planted themselves.

First rode the pursuivant on a tall bay horse, followed by three or four soldiers on foot, with their matchlocks resting on their shoulders. Then appeared the priests, three in number, clothed in black, and with their hands tied behind their backs; they were on horseback, and each horse led by an officer of justice, with his short sword in his hand. The procession closed with a small detachment of half-a-dozen more foot soldiers.

The guard was slender, for the arrest had been so sudden and unexpected, that, the means of conveying intelligence in those days being so scanty, it was imagined the prisoners would be safely deposited in the Tower before the news of their detention could have reached any of their friends; but such was the extent of that secret

net of intrigue, if the expression may be used, which enveloped England—extending from sea to sea—that intelligence of any disaster which might befall one of those engaged in carrying on these secret understandings spread in an inconceivably short space of time throughout the whole body; and Mr. Darcy had received the intelligence of the arrest of the missionary priests before it had reached the government.

A sudden volley of fire-arms flashed from amid the bushes. A ball from Robert's pistol struck down the pursuivant as he rode.

He was a fine young man of about one or two-and-twenty; no more. He fell to the earth without even a cry—and the rescuers rushed from the thicket, sword in hand, and endeavoured to seize upon and carry off the prisoners.

But the foot soldiers of those days were not to be lightly dealt with; they rallied round their prisoners—forced them from their horses—formed in a hollow square round them—and presenting their matchlocks, sent a volley among the attacking party, whom they mistook by their dress and visors for common robbers.

A ball passed through Robert's sword-arm, and rendered it useless; with his left he drew out and fired a second pistol, but no second man fell.

The skirmish was speedily decided. The soldiers and their matchlocks were more than a match for the two or three gentlemen who assailed them; their leader, wounded and bleeding, unable to animate them to a fresh attack, they had the mortification to see the cavalcade proceed on its way; dragging the priests on foot

ties to their horses, on which a soldier was severally mounted. The body of the unfortunate pursuivant thrown across his horse, closed the procession.

Robert sat upon the turf by the way-side—the blood streaming from his arm, as the party, at a turn of the road, disappeared behind the thickets, and was soon out of sight.

Several of the horses had been hurt, and some of the gentlemen had received slight wounds—the difficulty now with them all was, how best to conceal the part they had taken in the adventure; as it was certain that the queen's attorney-general in the trial, now inevitably impending, would make the most of a circumstance so suspicious as the attack of these young men, and attempted rescue.

There was nothing to be done but to abandon their horses—taking off their accoutrements which were carefully hidden in the thickets; to make their own way stealthily over the fields; and to take refuge in a house named White Webbes, which was situated somewhere in the neighbourhood of Epping Forest, and which had been purchased by the Jesuits under feigned names, to serve the purposes alike of a place of rendezvous and concealment.

How such houses, many of which the Jesuits are known to have possessed, escaped the searching eyes of the government, it seems difficult to understand; it may perhaps be accounted for, by the very limited means of observation which the government possessed. The houses of the principal Catholic gentry were well known, and were carefully watched; but separated by unfrequented

woods, by deep, obscure, and almost impassable lanes, the less considerable houses of the smaller proprietors, yeomen, and freeholders, very generally eluded observation.

This house had probably belonged to some Protestant or Puritan family, and had been purchased by one appearing to belong to that party; it was now occupied by a man, his wife, and one woman servant; still wearing the dress, and affecting the manners of that sect, whose solitary and stern habits of seclusion from the gay world and its society, accounted in the eyes of their neighbours for their unsocial ways of proceeding.

The day was dawning in the east before the party reached the place.

The heavy door opened at the secret signal, made by the hand of Wright; and the blank visage of the pretended Puritan presented itself. He soon recognised these gentlemen, and leading the way down a narrow passage, now faintly illuminated by the uncertain twilight of the morning, ushered them into a small room, where two narrow-paned windows placed at least seven feet from the ground, admitted a pale and dubious light.

“Bring us a light,” said Wright, “and let us see whether there is any thing more the matter with this fellow’s wound than we can doctor ourselves.”

They had before this bound a scarf tightly round it and stanchied the blood; they now, by the light which the man held, discovered that the ball had passed through the flesh, and that the bone of the arm was uninjured.

The man of the house, who was not deficient in some portion of surgical skill, speedily dressed the wound in a proper manner ; and a fire being lighted in the huge yawning chimney, the gentlemen sat down on some oaken benches which they drew around, and began to talk over their late defeat.

They spoke of it as brave and careless spirits, accustomed to the ups and downs of this world, are wont to talk of such matters—mingling with imprecations against their own ill luck, and the good success of their adversaries, the short laugh and the biting jest.

But Robert sat in a gloomy silence, leaning his back against the side of the chimney, and lost in thought.

They might jest—for they had come off neither injured, nor injurers, from the fray.

But what had he done ?

For the first time in his life he had slain a man.

He saw the gallant figure of that young pursuivant, as he headed the soldiers, advancing up the hill—the hasty flash of his own pistol—and there was a man dead.

It is easy in such a romance as this, to represent a bold restless spirit as was that of Robert, dealing death and destruction on every side with the indifference of a hero in an old tale of chivalry: but it is not so with real men: the most determined starts and shudders the first time he sheds human blood—be it in the heat of battle—be it in the agony of self-defence—in the duel—in the strife—by accident, by design. The most resolute shudders and turns cold, at the idea of death inflicted by his own hand.

Robert was not one possessing a very scrupulous conscience, nor endowed with any very refined view of things ; and this outrageous attack upon the authorities of his country appeared to him as a very venial sin—if sin it were to be called. But that was not what he was thinking of ; he was thinking of himself as stained with the blood of a human creature—of the gallant bearing of that young man, full of life, vigour, and action—and of the dead body swinging over the horse. The talk of the others was unheard, which they observing, yet too much in awe of this commanding spirit to venture upon asking the cause of his stern and gloomy silence, let their discourse sink gradually into a whisper, till they were silent too.

CHAPTER V.

“On appelle tuer en trahison quand on tue celui qui ne s'en défie en aucune manière—Et c'est pourquoi celui qui tue son ennemi n'est pas dit le tuer en trahison, quoique ce soit par derrière ou dans une embouche: licet per insidias, aut à tergo percutiat.”

Escobar; as quoted by Pascal, p. 134.

ROBERT had been kneeling before Father Darcy, and had received absolution for the deed he had done—for as to its being called a sin, the father would listen to no such doctrine.

He was far too perfect a master of casuistry not to have abundance of arguments in reserve, calculated to silence the reproaches of conscience, and allay that natural horror of bloodshed which agitated the heart of this young man; but Robert was excessively susceptible to impressions of every kind.

He had received absolution, but he was not as yet sufficiently habituated to the practice of putting his conscience into the keeping of another, so as to feel entirely reconciled to himself by this ceremony of his Church: he still continued dissatisfied and ill at ease.

He still saw the young pursuivant riding gallantly up the hill;—he still saw the body hanging over the horse;—and he still felt the pistol which had effected the deed explode in his hand.

A conversation upon the subject had followed the

ceremony of confession and absolution, as the two walked up and down a secluded walk in a thick wood which surrounded White Webbes, and effectively concealed them from observation.

This conversation took place some time after the event had occurred, when Mr. Darcy had returned from the north to the neighbourhood of London; the authors of the attempt had, as has been said, remained undiscovered; under the cover of a very heavy mist, they had severally succeeded in returning to their various lodgings without exciting remark.

The attack upon the escort had, of course, roused the attention of the government; and it had been readily concluded that this was no affair of common robbers, but an attempt on the part of the Catholics to rescue their priests. But not the slightest suspicion had attached to those who were really engaged.

Robert was still regarded as a Protestant, and his connexion with the Jesuit and missionary priests not in the least degree suspected. The remaining gentlemen were too obscure to excite much attention in any way, and not the slightest indication had been left by which to follow their traces.

The thing was soon regarded as an affair of inconsiderable importance;—the unfortunate pursuivant was buried, the priests safely lodged in the Tower, and the subject died away; and was little more thought of by any one, save by Robert himself.

“I cannot but marvel at you,” said Mr. Darcy, fixing his calm blue eye upon Robert’s troubled and clouded countenance, to which the extraordinary mild-

ness and serenity of his own afforded the most striking contrast. "A young gentleman of a brave spirit like yours—a man of action—a man of courage—a man of the world—to be as faint-hearted as a poor country wench, the first time she is commanded to slay a pullet for her mistress's table."

The expression of Robert's eye, as he looked suddenly up in the priest's face at this remark, was such as to demonstrate to the speaker that he was proceeding rather too fast:—the mind of his auditor was not yet prepared for so light a manner of treating such a subject.

"I cry you mercy," said he, correcting himself, "I spoke lightly—it might appear unfeelingly. I cry *pec-cavi* but I own it grieves me to see a spirit, generous and courageous like your own, grovelling and rendered unfit for useful action, by scruples which would disgrace"

"A mere girl, you mean," said Robert, bluntly; "but understand me, I care as little for blood—and so I may, perchance, have opportunity to show before the world has done with me—as any man; so it be shed in open strife, man to man. But here is a young fellow shot down in the performance of his duty, by one lying in a cowardly ambuscade; and my pistol it was that did it. The man is dead, and I can't forget it—that's all."

"That the man is dead must be lamented And yet, we must all die—and half a century hence it will little have mattered who went first or went last. As regards open strife, it is, doubtless, what young blood likes best—but young blood fortunately, or unfortu-

nately, has not to arbitrate upon all that it is necessary to do in this life. You speak of an ambuscade against an enemy, too powerful to be met in open warfare with any chance of success; all men are agreed upon the lawfulness of employing stratagem, ambuscade—what you will. This was a great occasion, young man—the deliverance of these holy ones from a cruel and barbarous death. Every thing is justifiable in such a cause; for, mark me, every action takes its colour from the motive. If, as it is allowed by our celebrated casuist, Navarrus,* even in a private quarrel it is lawful to choose, in certain cases, the alternative of destroying an enemy in secret, where it is probable one should come off worsted in open duel—surely, in a cause sacred as is this, all measures become not only legitimate, but praiseworthy. The end not only justifies, but ennobles the means. Were it better, think you, that a man like that reverend father—a man of rarest intellect, and extraordinary spiritual gifts—should perish in miserable torture, or that a common pursuivant, a mere animal, a mere effigy, a mere puppet of legal authority, with scarcely soul enough to animate a bull-dog—should render up his base and valueless life a few years, it may be a few days, a few hours only perhaps, earlier than he might otherwise have done? Who knows, after all, how much of the actual span of this man's existence was cut off by his violent death Think no more of this accident."

Did Robert's understanding and conscience acquiesce in such reasoning? Was he satisfied, and at rest?

* As quoted by Pascal, *Provinciales*, p. 134. 8vo. edition.

Not in the least.

He thought that his feelings were not in any degree understood, but he made no further attempt to explain them. His conscience remained unsatisfied ; but he was of far too impatient a temper to support the miserable burden of his self-reproaching thoughts. He did as many far better instructed than he was, have done; he hardened his heart against the recollection of what was wrong, and suffered the wound within to heal over without endeavouring to extract the sting, by repentance, by reparation, or by amendment.

He let the matter pass, and endeavoured to shake off the recollection of it.

An unrepented offence is as a moral poison: a conscience awakened and in vain is the precursor of moral death.

In the oriel window of her small and gloomy apartment which commanded a magnificent view of the Thames, her casement open, her head leaning upon her hand, sat Grace Vaux.

The Thames might at that time have been considered as the great thoroughfare of London—for the streets were in general so narrow, so dirty, so ill-kept, so impeded with dirt and mud, in wet weather, and the dust so suffocating when the sun was hot, that almost every one who possessed the means, preferred the passage by water ; and the river, now covered with coal-vessels, wherries, and steamboats, offered then a very different spectacle.

Richly gilded barges with streamers flying, rowed by men in the splendid liveries of the different noble families to which they belonged, were continually passing and repassing ; and when the queen, as at this moment, took that way to go down to her palace at Greenwich, nothing that we have to exhibit in this our day, can bear comparison with the gaiety and splendour of the pageant. The sad and sorrowful figure of Grace, was in melancholy contrast with the scene. Her hair was braided plainly over her temples, and surmounted by a small plain hood ; her dress was of a conventual simplicity, composed of a dark and somewhat coarse stuff ; which displayed to perhaps peculiar advantage, the fairness of her complexion, and the angelic purity of her countenance.

She was deadly pale, and the fair hands which were clasped and resting upon the window seat, as she watched the pageant upon the water, were tinted by the blue colour of the veins, which might be distinctly seen through their transparent delicacy.

The room lined with its dark wainscot ; the pictures in their ebony frames, in the gloomiest manner of the gloomiest Spanish painters ; their ghostly subjects—those of martyrdom, torture, and death ; the furniture scanty and bare even to rudeness ; the black oaken table that stood near her, on which lay her books of piety in black leather bindings ; served to contrast with and throw into brighter relief, that beautiful fair face and hands, as pale and pensive there she sat.

At one end of the chamber Mother Anne was sitting as usual, clothed in her black dress, employed in some

of those works that had formed the recreations of her monastic life, and at which she still laboured at set hours; endeavouring, in all this, to maintain the rule of that order to which she had belonged, when thus restored against her will to secular life.

It was a piece of most delicate lace on which she was engaged: one of those rare specimens of needlework, the result of persevering industry, in the leisure of the conventual life—a life, where industry was little recompensed, and time of no account. Sold, they most often were, and the proceeds distributed to the poor at a price so far below the real value of the time they consumed, that their production under the present order of things is become an impossibility. This delicate web hung from the withered hands of the old nun, and fell upon her black dress; giving a singular and beautiful effect of light as there it lay.

This was intended for a priest's garment—or it may be to be sold, and the money scrupulously devoted to purposes of piety—it is not material what the purpose was; and it is only mentioned here to obviate the idea, that any motive of personal advantage stimulated to the industry of such recluses as Mother Anne.

The silence in the room was perfectly unbroken; neither spoke—the nun never raised her head from that on which she was employed, and the young lady's eyes were fixed upon the pageant before her.

The day was bright, the heavens blue and without a cloud; the sun in his meridian strength, glittering upon the gilded cornices, pinnacles, and various orna-

ments which enriched the barges. Loud blasts from the trumpets sounded from time to time through the air, and came mingling with the soft breeze that was blowing so pleasantly through the casement.

The river in all his pride, danced and foamed with ten thousand rippling waves upon his bosom; the opposite banks—then one bower of gardens and trees—were clad in their beautiful green of spring; all nature in her most festive trim seemed rejoicing, victorious over sorrow, and shame, and pain.

The young lady's heart trembled and sickened at the contrast.

“There they go,” thought she, “that heretic and idolatrous crew—rejoicing in their pride, and pomp, and gladness—and not a cloud obscures the heavens, or casts its shadow over them; not a moan or sigh escapes from the soft wind; the sun, like a giant in his strength, pursues his glad career, casting warmth, and light, and joy, upon them all... The loud trumpets are clanging in their triumph—the river dancing in his strength—all is one bright scene of enjoyment: and where art thou?

“In thy dark, cold, solitary, pensive chamber—in the Lollards' Tower, shut out from all that should cheer or support thy soul before the terrors that await thee!

“Who pauses to think of thee amid that giddy throng? Who prays for thee, patient and holy sufferer—who remembers the rack-house, the scaffold, and the butchers' knife?—Who mourns for thee?

“Thou sun ! who pourest such floods of light upon

a world of shame' and sin—upon the apostate, the heretic, the schismatic and the atheist—visit him in his house of sorrow !”

Then lifting up her hands she began a prayer—passionate, despairing, as of one in deep agony, to the Virgin Mother, and the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, entreating their intercessions in favour of the sufferer.

The door of the chamber suddenly opened, and a young man entered impetuously: he turned round, however, and closed the door carefully after him, with a caution that contrasted strangely with his ordinary demeanour : he glanced hastily round the room and at the ancient nun at the other end of it—who never once lifted up her head : and then approaching the window, knelt down on one knee, lifted one of the fair hands to his lips, and kissed it.

But with a fervour, a depth of reverent devotion, such as a pious Catholic might feel before the shrine of the Virgin Mother.

The young lady withdrew her hand, and clasping the delicate fingers together rested them once more upon the window seat ; while Robert — for he it was — drew a low wooden stool towards the opposite side of the small oriel window and sat down.

“ You have seen him ?” asked she, in a hurried voice.
“ You have seen him, and. . . . ”

“ And therefore am I here,” said he, his eyes darkening with a strange sort of expression—“ Yes; I *have* seen

him—I have seen him twice, the last time was in the Lollards' Tower."

"You have succeeded then!" casting upon him a look of delight and gratitude, which he gathered up into his heart, as the wayfarer in the desert gathers the dew of heaven. "By what means? You have penetrated into that dark and dismal chamber!—Oh! Robert! and by what means?"

"Ask me not the means," said he, somewhat gloomily. "Henceforward ask me not of the means by which I accomplish your biddings. Be satisfied, sweet saint, that the end is accomplished I who would kiss the dust beneath your feet, as if I traced the footsteps of the Queen of Heaven, shall quarrel with no means by which I effect thy purposes, Grace! Accept the heart's offering but ask not after the peril—be satisfied I have done it."

"By no ill means, I will be thy warrant, Robert," said she, fervently.

"Pledge not thyself for me, angel," said he, impetuously. "Henceforward pledge not thyself for me: the path I have entered will lead me far—but thou art the pole star of my hopes—the guiding planet of my destiny: whithersoever I wander thou shalt shine upon me from above, and let my path lead where it may—be it to heaven or be it to hell—what reck I so it leads to thee!"

She shrank back and looked alarmed and displeased at this rhapsody, and gathering herself up with all her accustomed coldness, said:

“Will you never cease from these desperate and impious speeches, so grievous and distressful to me? . . . Is this a time, when the blood of the martyred spirits is crying for vengeance, and tears of fruitless indignation are blinding our eyes, is this a time to talk in such a sort?”

“Yes,” said he, “it is a time to talk in such a sort: for the passion for vengeance, the fires of indignation, are all raging in my heart, and mingling with my wild, my desperate, my hopeless idolatry. It is one feeling. Those scalding tears of thine drop like molten lead upon my heart—they bid me be all thou wouldst have me be: that influence withdrawn and what remains?—a poor, careless sinner; incapable of right and indifferent to wrong.”

He would have taken her hand again, and sealed with his lips a vow—a vow of obedience to her commands; but she withdrew it, and looking down with that air of extreme modesty which had for him such irresistible attraction, said:

“Tell me of *him*”—

“He is prepared for the worst.”

“Hath he confessed?”

“Not a syllable.”

“And those other poor men?”

“I know not what the rack may wring from them; but such horrors are powerless with *him*.”

She turned very pale.

“You do not mean it!—they will not dare!—oh, Holy Father!” and clasping her hands over her eyes she

bent down her head and wept for a few moments with much bitterness.

"Be comforted, Grace: do not weep so; Grace, do not weep so; Grace... Grace, you will make me desperate; don't weep so, Grace!"

Her tears soon ceased; she had acquired an almost supernatural power over her emotions: she sat a moment or two, recovering herself in silence, then she said:

"He remembers us in his prayers?"—

"He bade me say—In torture and in death, on the rending rack or the shameful scaffold, his first thought and his last should be of thee."

"Oh why!" burst she out in lamentation, and almost in the words of Job—"Oh why! doth the sun shed its light on such a day! Let this day be blotted out from among the days; let it be darkened, let not the light shine upon it! Let darkness and the shadow of death rest upon it; let the blackness as of midnight terrify it!"

And giving one other glance at the bright picture of life and joy before her, she turned her head again away, and again wept bitterly.

Her tears produced almost a terrific effect upon Robert; he sat there by her side in one of those paroxysms of suppressed emotions which drove him nearly out of his senses; he rose up, he sat down again; he stooped and wiped the tears as they fell upon her hands murmuring

"Weep not, Grace—weep not, holy creature—weep not, Grace, if you would not drive me distracted."

"Nay, let me weep," said she, sadly; "this is a busy world, and there are few who have leisure to weep for the righteous in his death Was there not that pageant of some few short days ago? Were you not all as gay, as thoughtless, as mirthful; was there one galliard the fewer, one jest the less, because the holiest and the noblest of the earth was even that very hour captured, and in chains?"

"Blame us not—blame us not," said he, "so heavily. . . . Sweet Grace; were you not there yourself?"

"Yes, yes, I was there," she said, with some impatience in her tone; "I was there in obedience to him who hath the right to enjoin obedience. But, oh! far rather would these bare feet upon the flinty stones have paced a pilgrimage of blood and tears, than trod those halls as I did to desecrate that day. And you!" added she, in a sarcastic tone, which she rarely used, "you—how did Robert spend the last hours of that night—at shuffle board?—at the dice . . . ?"

"Yes," said he, with a strange expression of countenance, half desperate half in defiance, "I was at the tavern that night. Nay," as she turned with an air of disgust from him, "blame me not, I left the tavern before daybreak, and was afterwards employed staking my soul in the behalf of those you love, Grace."

She looked at him wondering.

"Did you hear of a rescue in St. John's Wood? attempted—and attempted in vain!" said he.

"Something of that sort I heard spoken of," she replied, with indifference; "a mere attack of robbers, they say."

“There was a young man killed, however. But what is the life of one man?”—eyeing her.

“What have we to do with such things?” said she; “what have these broils upon the queen’s high-road to do with us? It was no rescue.—What is it to us?”

“It was a rescue, or should have been....and I was there.”

She started—and again looked at him with a mixture of joy and approbation that was too potent, alas! in its effect upon him.

“You do not say so? I heard you passed that fearful night in gambling, Robert. Oh! how unjust I was!”

“I was far better engaged,” said he, gloomily; “I was embruing my hands in the blood of an innocent man.”

“But in what a cause!”—in a tone of remonstrance, as if she, too, could not comprehend his scruples.

“Ay—ay, in what a cause!—You say right, Grace, and I will never lament over innocent blood again. But come, let us have done with the subject. The attempt failed—let us forget it;—forget all and every thing, but that one look of thine, Grace, which can make a demon or a martyr of me.”

CHAPTER VI.

“I will believe, thou hast a mind that suits
With this thy fair and outward character.”

Shakspeare.

WHILE such scenes were passing among one portion of those whom we saw dancing in that hall of the Palace of Old Westminster; others, in so far happier that they had not as yet become involved in these dark intrigues, were spending their thoughts and time in a far different manner.

In not very magnificent but pleasant apartments looking out upon the fields of what was then, as now, called Bloomsbury; but which, as every one knows, was not then, as now, a labyrinth of streets, but a pleasant country parish of fields and hedges and gardens, overlooked agreeably by the few houses standing in that direction; in these apartments Everard and his sister Eleanor, having finished their breakfast, were sitting together. The young man, sunk into a deep reverie, sat watching the pleasant moving of the trees as they swayed up and down in this sweet morning, soothed by the distant street cries, as they came in a sort of cheerful harmony upon his ear. He was thinking of the last night's entertainment—of the bright and magnificent scene—the music of which seemed to sound, and the lights to

smile before his eyes. Most of all he was meditating upon the fact of the eyes which had met his with such a sweet expression of confidence and pleasure; — the soft and low and pleasant voice which had answered so simply, yet so well. And of that smile with its gentle, delicious, but not severe brow, which had seemed to have seen it nothing in that scene but his confidence.

He began to recollect every little sentence that had passed between him and M- Muisin.

This was not the first time, it is true, that they had met; but it was the first time that one so reserved and silent in his habits as M- Muisin, had happened to enter into conversation with Everett, a man so much younger than himself. And Everett was wondering whether it was a mere flattering illusion of his own too fond heart, which led him to think that there was something in M- Muisin's manner, which bespoke a more than ordinary attention to, and interest in his answers was he trying him? And if so—how had he acquitted himself?

Such were the subjects of the young man's reverie.

He was answered by a deep sigh from the other end of the room.

He looked round; it was Eleanor.

She, too, was sitting at the window, but she was not gazing at the pleasant scene without; she seemed insensible to the glories of earth or sky. She was cast in a desponding attitude, across her chair; leaning against the back of it, her hand over her forehead, her eyes bent upon the ground.

He rose instantly, and went up to her with an ex-

pression of kindness in his countenance, which gave a peculiar charm to it.

“My Eleanor, my sweet sister! that was a very bitter sigh.”

She started—looked up in a hurried manner at him, like one just awakened from a dream—and passing her hands swiftly across her hair, as if to arrange its disorder, said, in a hasty tone:

“Sigh, Everard! what are you thinking of? I am sure I did not sigh—what should *I* sigh for?”

“Nay, what indeed, sweet girl,” said he, fondly—“what should my lovely Eleanor sigh for? I am sure,” he added, with a kind smile, “I thought all the world was sighing for you last night—you must leave it to others to sigh; but what was it? Tell me, sweetheart; for you did sigh.”

“Mere weariness,” said she, looking another way—“I danced more than usual I believe. Was I not fast asleep just now?”

“Nay, Eleanor,” said her brother, with a somewhat gentle gravity in his manner. “Why should you hide your heart from me? Have you not yet learned, foolish sister, that you have in me, father, mother, brother, friend, in one? That is to say—orphans as we are, my dear one; your Everard would fain be all this to you. Tell me, sweet love, for there is the line of sorrow upon your cheek. I have read it more than once of late. Tell me your secret, Eleanor.”

“I have no secrets, Everard,” said she, slightly colouring, and rising from her chair. “What should I

have secrets about? I am very idle this morning" going up to a table on which stood her working-frame and her lute. "It is you, sir, who are lost in black musings. Shall I play you a tune or sing you a song?"

And taking her lute, she began to tune, or attempt to tune it. Crack went one string after the other.

He looked at her with anxious interest.

There was something enthusiastic in Eleanor's countenance and manners, which was not restrained or moderated by habits of self-discipline and sound principles of action. She had not learned the necessity of such things from her confessor. Her brother was at once interested and alarmed by it. Though usually full of vivacity and animation, there was that in Eleanor which seemed not destined to be happy.

"Come, come," he said, "put down that instrument—either it, or you, are ill-disposed for melody to-day;" and sitting down, and taking her hand, "tell me what it is that vexes my Eleanor."

"How tiresome you are," said she, turning petulantly away from him. "Why will you persist in asking what's the matter with me? a bad headache after dancing, that's all. . . I wish you would not be so tiresome, Everard—"

He had the sweetest temper in the world—it seemed as if nothing could irritate him.

"Well—I will hope it is all as you say then. Only remember, dear Eleanor—whenever you have *really* cause to sigh, come to your brother."

Another sigh seemed struggling for utterance; but

she kept it down with strong effort, and walked away to the window.

She made no return to his kindness ; but he never heeded that—he sat down at the table, looking upon the broken strings of the lute, and still pondering upon this strange disorder :—something was the matter with Eleanor—it was some time that he had observed this.

And then the thought came into his head—or rather into his heart—that a girl of her age was not likely to confide her little woman's secrets even to a brother. And first he sighed to think how lonely they both were, and then he smiled and thought of Evelyn.

He followed her kindly to the window, where she stood turning her back to him—it did not appear whether melancholy or sulky, but looking very gloomy :

“Never mind, Eleanor—don't think I can be hurt at you—the time may come when there will be one here so sweet and good, that my sister may find a pleasure in opening her heart to her.—Do you love Evelyn, Eleanor? I thought I saw you and she speaking together last night as friends should.”

He thought to win her confidence by bestowing some of his own, though rather against his inclination—for he was one who loved to keep such feelings sacred.

She felt this kindness extremely—and quite subdued by it, lifted up her head and said :

“Beloved brother! dear Everard! how gentle and how kind you always are! and how petulant and unreasonable I am! It is no wonder every one hates Eleanor.”

THE "NEW YORK TIMES" and the "NATION" have
in their columns the most ~~new~~ help low
in the

DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES

THE SECOND OF THE THREE THINGS THAT SHE
SAYS THE FIRST IS THAT THERE IS SOMETHING, GRACE
THAT IS A LITTLE BIT OF THE GOD OF THE
UNIVERSE WHO SHE IS

1. I have not seen the subject being mentioned at
the meeting.

[illegible]

the case and assist them in the forensic. When the information is in force of this remains doubt-
ful for the party to the

and I think that sooner or later he will. I have
not done this with Father Darcy upon this matter.
He is misled by my friend. That Grace is devoted
to a life of religion he assures me: and that this brief
madness of Robert's will not be lasting. Mr. Darcy is
entirely mistaken in any thing he asserts."

“Do you hold for this?” said she:—and on! how in
her inmost heart she blessed, and almost worshipped
Mr. Carey.

"The best endeavours will not be spared," continued *Fitzroy*, "he is a judicious, sensible, and benevolent

man—he is more than a spiritual father to us all; he is anxious not only for the eternal, but for the temporal happiness of his children. He will rescue Robert, I doubt not, from the thralldom of this hapless passion, for he has great power over his mind. Robert, through his means, will learn sooner or later to be happy in the way other people are.”

As he spoke, her countenance became bright, her eyes sparkled, and that smile of delightful animation which he loved, played round her beautiful mouth.

“ I have been very cross this morning with my lute,” said she, cheerfully. “ Come here, old fellow, and let me put thee into better trim than I was in myself. And now what shall I sing you? The doleful ditty of Lord Thomas and the fair Emmeline—no, no; my best Everard deserves something less melancholy than that.” And striking the strings, she sang one of those pretty simple madrigals which still have the power to please so much. While he, thrown back in his chair and his eyes half closed, abandoned himself once more to his sweet dreamy fancies.

CHAPTER VII

*"Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy."*

Shakespeare.

AMONG the many fine houses built during this century, of which I have spoken in the opening chapter, may be mentioned that of Goddeshurst, or Goteshurst—now lost in the less significant name of Gayhurst, in Buckinghamshire. It is a very noble specimen of that beautiful style of architecture, which bears such ample testimony to the magnificence and fine taste of the Elizabethan period of our domestic history. The many pinnacled points, the numerous finely-proportioned windows, the handsome porch over which the arms of the Mulshos are yet sculptured, the large and yet just proportions of the whole edifice, carry an appearance of chastened splendour, which is rendered still more pleasing by the situation being upon a gentle rising ground, and backed by the fine woods which half surround it.

The sweeping hills and valleys of Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire lie round this mansion, in most places now sadly denuded of trees, and waving in its stead with seas of corn; but in former days, the country

was more finely wooded, and those noble beech trees which still linger in clusters upon its steep, and nestle in its secluded valleys, were more generally diffused over the landscape.

A small church stands about a hundred paces from the house with some fine old oaks hanging over it; but it has been rebuilt in the taste of later times, and offers little to memory or imagination.

Altogether, Gayhurst is still a very fine old place—but it was far more attractive to a romantic taste towards the end of the sixteenth century, when it became the inheritance of the lovely Evelyn Mulsho.

It is a fine morning, the sun is not yet risen above the horizon, but the east is all bright with glorious colouring, and the long, dark shadows are lying heavy upon the grass, from which the very slight hoar frost of the night has in most places already disappeared.

The noble trees that surround the mansion, and that clothe the swelling banks beyond, are rich with all the beautiful tints of the season. The sound of cheerful business is in the air, for the hinds are already at their work and the wains are winding down the steep and narrow ways; the song of the milkmaid, as she trips over the fields to her pleasant task, is heard. All around speaks of ease, tranquillity, and peaceful industry.

But there is a considerable bustle in the court and stable-yard, on one side of the mansion, for it is a hunting morning. The bugles are sounding a lively *reveillé*;

There is a noise of horses and hounds gathering together
in the court, and the deep baying of the slow-hounds
resounds in intervals from the main distant kennel.

Presently a ringing hurrahey is heard from a couple
of minstrels with their voices who are joined in their
song by the deep bass of the organ and tinklers:

- The hunt is up—the hunt is up,
They hurry in the hunt is up,
The hunt-day song,
The hunt-day song,
They hurry, hurry, hur!

And now different groups are seen issuing from the
stable-yard, and beneath the lofty trees which separate
it from the lawn in front of the house: they are assem-
bling round the green, waiting for the master of the
hounds to appear. First come a number of yeomen-
keepers, leading the large slow-hounds by which the
hunt was to be raised. Magnificent dogs, whose
voices were awfully martial, according to the practice
of those times, so as to produce the true concert of the
woods in harmonious perfection, of which we have at
present little idea. They had more of poetry in their
songs in Queen Elizabeth's days than we have now;
who but remembers Shakespeare's beautiful lines:—

- My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,
Each under each.

The low impatient baying of the dogs broke forth at
intervals, as they strained against the leashes held by the
keepers; men dressed in Kendal green, with their bugles
and short hangers by their sides, and their quarter-staffs
in their hands.

A numerous body of retainers in the livery of the house of Mulsho, and bearing their crest—the wheatsheaf—upon one arm, now crowded round the hounds and their keepers, all impatient for the start. Soon the old huntsman in his suit of Kendal green, with his small cap on his head, and his large hunting staff in his hand, rode merrily forth followed by the squires and pages, leading the horses of those gentlemen, who having shared Mr. Mulsho's hospitality the night before, were now prepared to mount on this fine morning, and enjoy the pleasures of that chase which he still maintained in its full perfection, though he now never shared in it himself. He had, however, risen, and might be seen in his suit of sad-coloured cloth, very richly embroidered, attending his guests to the door, and looking with a calm yet benevolent pleasure upon the animated crowd there assembled.

The horns, sounding at intervals, were accompanied by the cheering voices of the men, and the prancing and neighing horses, the whole scene being illuminated by the fresh beams of the rising sun, which shone full upon them; the cooling air, the tempered blue of the sky, the mist still hanging between the trees, all united to give that peculiar charm to the scene, which only accompanied the fresh and sparkling air of the early morning.

The huntsman gives the well-known signal—the hunt sweeps away, and the blast of the horns and the baying of the dogs are heard in the distance.

Mr. Mulsho remained upon the steps just in front of his porch, watching the last of the horsemen and footmen, who, passing down the descent, were soon lost in

the wooded valley below, and listening with pleasure to the hoarsely-mingled voices of men and dogs, as they came mellowed by distance to his ear.

They have entered the thicket, the large tan-coloured ban-dog tied in his leam or band follows his keeper into the tangled brush-wood; his low baying is heard at intervals . . . till the hart of greece is roused; a noble stag breaks cover, and away sweeps the chase over hill and dale.

Several gentlemen had by this time joined it from the neighbouring country-houses, and followed on their fine steeds, dressed in their rich hunting suits—a brave and joyous company.

The deer went at first straight as an arrow forward, but as the day advanced, exhausted and breathless, he made a circuit and sought, in a sort of melancholy despondency, the covert in which he had harboured in the morning; and his lips whitened with foam, his tongue black with agony and thirst hanging from his mouth, and the tears dropping from his eyes, rushed into the still and tiny lake which lay in the valley below—overhung by the thicket from whence he started, and formed by the accumulation of a bright sparkling stream that went gurgling and playing through the trees.

The still and glancing water lay sleeping in the sunbeams; the broad leaves of the water-lily covering one of its sides, whereon the little water-hens were tripping daintily along, as if they walked the water. The insects were glittering and sparkling in the sun, and Mr. Mulsho, who had in the course of the morning walked down through the thicket, was standing in his usual musing

mood, gazing upon the pleasant scene, and enjoying its beauty—when he again heard the sound of the hounds and the hunters come echoing through the woods ; and the whole chase burst upon him hurrying up the sides of the valley. It was in that part considered somewhat dangerous, from the rushy, boggy, and uncertain nature of the ground of which it was composed : the stag, sweeping by, rushed into the little lake, and laved his hot and panting sides in the cool waters: the eager hunters, cruel and pitiless in the passion of pursuit, stood upon the slippery and uncertain bank, with their baying dogs clustering eagerly round them, ready to attack the hapless animal as soon as he should reach the shore.

It was plain he intended to stand at bay, or rather to make a rush at the hunters and fight his way bravely for life and liberty ; but the crowd were only excited to more eagerness by the spirit and fierceness of the animal—all was hubbub and confusion.

Mr. Mulsho stood upon the opposite bank—which was so precipitous, that it was impossible the deer should escape on that side—watching the scene.

A remarkably handsome young man and very fine rider, was distinguishable among a party of gentlemen who had joined the chase from the house of the Lord Vaux at Harroden Magna, situated it might be, going straight across the country, about ten miles from Godshurst.

He had been riding gaily among the foremost all the day ; filled with the wild delight of the scene—but

now, as he saw the unhappy animal, who had so gloriously strained over the champaign in the morning, harassed and spent with toil, and seeking his accustomed thickets, and after plunging into the water preparing in desperation for a last struggle,—every generous feeling in his nature was aroused, and seeing Mr. Mulsho standing upon the bank, he rode vehemently forward, and shouting till he was hoarse entreated him to interpose his authority and save the animal.

Mr. Mulsho—far from unwilling—gave the signal to draw off the hounds, and the young man was riding rapidly towards him, when forgetting the uncertainty of the ground he was traversing, he plunged suddenly into the midst of a green and treacherous bog, and there continued struggling in the utmost peril of his life; while the stag he had rescued, released from the terrors of his persecuting enemies, swam with a few bold strokes across the little lake, and was soon lost to sight among his native woodlands.

Much about the same time, or half an hour afterwards, a very lovely young lady—whose sweet smile, soft countenance, and gentle blue eyes, you have not forgotten—was sitting in her chamber in one of the projections on the left side of the porch, busily employed at her embroidery.

The room is lofty and beautifully proportioned, and is rich in internal ornament; the ceiling is covered over

with a tracery of vine leaves and grape branches; the walls are hung with fine tapestry, which represents a scene from the "Jerusalem" of Tasso; the trees and flowers seem to live upon the hangings, and the fountain to sparkle with living waters, from whence the unhappy Tancred fetches it in his helmet to baptise the dying Clorinda.

The chairs and stools of crimson in frames of gilded oak, agreeably relieved this cool and pleasant scene, while the wooing air blew fresh through the open casement, and waved the locks of the fair creature who sat at work within.

There was the reverend Mrs. Maude dressed in black, sitting at a little distance: and a youth—as his smooth countenance might lead one to believe, yet something past a youth, as a brow not altogether free from wrinkles, and an eye of strange meaning implied—dressed in a fantastical many-coloured suit, leaning against the side of the oriel window.

There was a table in the middle of the room, on which several books in purple velvet bindings were lying—and some in soberer garb seemed devoted to use as well as ornament: a small triangular spinet or virginal, and a highly ornamented lute, which lay upon a small carved, what we should now-a-days call console, completed the furniture of the apartment. The young lady was simply but richly dressed, and her fair hair hung over and shadowed her face.

The fantastical-looking being, who was called Fabian, kept twisting his legs and nodding his head in a strange restless sort of manner, and singing in an under-tone to himself.

“ He had as antique stories tell,
A daughter cleaped Dowsabel,
A maiden fair and free—
She was her father’s only heir.

“ The silk well couth she twist and twine,
And make the fine march pine,
And with the needle-work—”

At last he stopped suddenly—and, looking at the young lady, said,

“ Well, Madonna—and so you keep your fair head bent over that perking carnation there, which is as much like a peony as a carnation, and don’t care to hear how the hunt went,—or how the young gentleman’s steed sank in the moss-bog by the brook there, and he, poor cavalier, had his rich hunting suit be-plastered over with a stygian sort of mud ; such as is, I verily believe, only to be found in that one spot of the drumble, or by the side of that river of Acheron which flows by Dan Pluto’s dwelling.”

The young lady raised her head from her work, smiled, and said,

“ The poor young gentleman !—Did he take it much to heart ?—A wet jacket is a huge disaster to a court gallant—which he must of course be, and very ignorant of wood-craft to boot ; or he would never have trusted the treacherous moss, Fabian.—But why should I spend my pearly drops over such disasters ? Tell me, good boy—what was there in this besmirched gallant to engage valuable attention ?”

“ Was there any further mischief ?” said the grave Mrs. Maude.

“ Why, Mrs. Maude—I will tell of that by-and-by—

and how a raven sat and croaked upon a sere bough for his brisket bone: for that small circumstance alone would be sufficient to make a piteous tragedy of any morning's work for you—" said Fabian. "But first I want to make the Madonna here, beautiful as we all pretend she is, look ten times more so, by the application of a certain nostrum of my own, excellent as I have before experimented, for calling roses into blow on certain delicate cheeks;—but don't be afraid, Madonna, it's an innocent spell enough, and consists only of the pronunciation of a few harmless letters. Shall I recite them?"

The young lady bent her head down, and began to work her colours and compare her pattern; and then to undo what she had done as if she had not heard one word that Fabian said.

"Oh! oh," said he, "say you so.—Aye, true—

' My true love is sunk in the sea ;
But what is that to me,
Others as good remain,
Though Lord Thomas, he never come again.'

Well, the sun is shining upon the weathercock at the top of what was once ours.—I mean the church; and the black gentry, with their short cloaks and foul yellow wizened faces, are hastening up to prayers. And the Madonna there doesn't care for all the handsome huntsmen in the world—swallowed up in bogs, or knocked on the head by their horses' heels—and I'm thinking the best turn I can do for the family, is to perform their duty for them, and show my face in the Madonna's traverse at church. And maybe the good souls will think my

master and theirs—and the dainty Madonna herself, and you, Mrs. Maude, are all behind, if you dared to show your recusant faces. You've forgot your Sundays, fair ladies; but I keep the reckoning—one, two, three, and no church—four, and your twenty pounds.”—

“You don't say that the horse struck him, fool,” said the young lady, now looking up; “how could the horse strike him, and he on his saddle?”

“Saddles may turn when steeds are wrestling with the death struggle in those bogs; and the best cavaliers may be unhorsed. And when there comes a blow from the hoof of the great horse—however thick our skulls, saving your presence—there may be bloody coxcombs: that's all.”

The needle and silk fell from her hand; she rose hastily, and went up to the youth, who still kept his place, leaning against the window, his legs crossed, and swinging his head up and down in a half-foolish, half-ridiculous manner.

“You don't say any thing so shocking as that happened?”

“Say an arm, will that do better, Madonna?” said he, carelessly; “or, say both; for you know you don't care a silver bodkin about the matter

‘For others will remain,
Though Lord Thomas he never come again.’”

“I will brain you with a silver bodkin,” said she, impatiently, “if you don't tell us what really did happen this morning at the hunting.”

“Why, the hounds did cry and make the welkin ring again, and the stag ran, poor beast, for life and

limb, and the chase came clattering down the beech-wood into the Drimy Hollow, and hart of greece crossed the flashing stream, and the whole chase thundering after him; and I sat perched upon a tree,

‘ As pure a black crow as your eyes might see,
And I croaked my evil song as the chase swept by,
And down went the bold huntsman—sing lullaby.’

And now, Madonna, what’s the use of wasting good breath upon needless words. You know as well as if I had hallooed like Woodland Tom, the huntsman, who it was that came dashing like a madman through the mosses—and hallooing like a desperado to our master, your honoured father—and all for what, think you? To save the poor stag.—Tom the huntsman thinks he well deserved what he got.—To save a poor stag!—As if any but fools and idiots cared for *them*—poor innocent brutes!.... And now the Madonna, perhaps, guesses *whose* green jacket it was, embroidered with silver, that came out smeared all over with the black mud—for there is but one youth upon earth, I verily believe, soft-hearted enough to care for a silly stag: but don’t be frightened, the brave steed did *not* brain him. And if you had not guessed that much already, belike we should have found you on the floor by this time. Ay, marry, should we—with as little blood in your face, as he would have had brains in his noddle.”

The young lady, who had smiled with pleasant approbation at the first part of his speech, now gave a significant “Pish,” and was returning to her seat.

“Soft,” said he, “there’s better news than you think of for you. He’s broke his arm.”

The young lady started, first turned pale, then red.

“Call you that good news, fool?” said Mrs. Maude.

“Ay, marry, do I. And if the Madonna be of my mind, she’ll make a silver crib and an ivory manger for that sensible steed—who better deserves the name of semi-reasoning brute, in my humble thinking—than any elephant that ever carried an Emperor of Samarkand—clever beast—to vent his own ill-blood, serve his master, and please the fairest Madonna in Buckinghamshire.”

“But you don’t intend to tell us there really was an accident, Fabian, after all?” said the young lady.

“There’s an arm broken, Madonna; but it’s not a sword-arm. Was there ever a beast hit a matter so in the white;—had it been a leg, he might never have danced galliard more. Besides, a limping lover! Venus forbid—and a sword-arm!—fie! Our good queen—bless her royal humour—would have taken back his knighthood, as they say she swears to do by the Essex dubbed—if he’d lost his sword-arm.”

“Lose his sword-arm! you are worse and worse—he will not lose his arm, surely—”

“No—no—no—put your red in your cheeks again. I only offered the inuendo of the thing—only the supposition bare: he’ll keep his two arms: put your red in your cheeks again, Madonna—or I vow by Saint Withhold I’ll never tell you a hunting history again.”

“Well,” said she, recovering her spirits, “you may go on now, for you see I am as red as a rose;—and I dare say there is neither skull, nor limb, nor finger even fractured but in your fantastical imagination—and the cavalier you

spoke of has ridden home with a spot of mud on his doublet, which you have magnified into all this direful history."

"And very much pleased a dainty young lady of my particular acquaintance would look, if she thought she was so well quit of it all; but that's not to be—for the arm is broken and the arm is set, and the cavalier is coming at a foot's pace through the fields; and his valise is coming up upon the back of one of the chasers, and his serving men are sent for from Harroden Magna; and the young gentleman is a prisoner here for seven days at least, says Dr. Caius—and so, Madonna, I'm grieved and lament for you—but remedy there's none, save in patience.

' And heigh says she, and ho says she,
Was ever a fate like mine?
For the door is unbarred to the enemy;
And how shall I bide the time?' "

"And now," said grave Mrs. Maude, whose perceptions were rather of the obtuse kind—"pray, fool, why don't you tell us the name of the young gentleman—because if you never tell us his name, how shall we know, after all, who he is."

"Most true, my owl-crowned Minerva in sables—most true; the Madonna here has not an inkling of who he is. Oh no—suppose"—looking archly in her face—"his name should *not* contain the magical seven letters. Suppose now it were—were—Robert—"

"Pooh!" said the young lady, colouring again and looking vexed, "is it he after all?"

"After all!—No, no, catch Robert in such a quan-

dary — catch Robert a floundering if you can: Robert will never be bogged, I'll lay my bauble against your gold aiglet there. Robert in such a mess—Robert—forsooth!—Robert!”

“ And why not Robert, as well as any other man?”

“ Oh! are we there?—Come don't be vexed, Madonna; a man may be bogged, and no great shame or sin—because he's young and hasty, and don't look before his nose: but Robert's a man of experience: why, Robert's not a bachelor—he's a widower, Madonna—aye, he's known the shifting sands and rocks, and whirlpools of a woman's humour. Such things practise a man. A man who's once been hooked to a woman, never forgets to look before his nose again.”

“ What stuff is all this?” said she, “ get along, fool—if your folly has no more wit or wisdom than that, you may go down to your puritans below, for the bell has done ringing.”

“ And all this time you go on maundering and maundering, and never coming to the point,” reiterated Mrs. Maude, “ and never telling us who the young gentleman is.”

“ Ask the Madonna,” said he.

“ Nay, I am sure the fair Mistress Evelyn cannot possibly guess,” said she.

“ ‘ And aye to be sure, and no to be sure;
And how should I guess, said she;
But there came a sweet bird, and sang in her ear,
'Tis he—'tis he—'tis he.’ ”

“ You heard it, didn't you, Madonna; though Mrs. Maude there is as deaf as a nut.”

"I'm not deaf," said she, angrily; "and I'm quite certain you never *did* tell us."

"I didn't say I did—I said a bird did; which you couldn't, and didn't hear, because you are as deaf as a hollow nut. A hollow nut has not got a heart in it, and that makes it deaf, Mrs. Maude—and that's the reason you didn't hear that merry bird sing. Heigh! Madonna! Is not that reasoned like the Stagyrte himself?"

"Fool," said she, "I'll tell my father you grow tedious, and he'll send you to drive the plough."

Fabian only answered by singing, in an under tone:

"And oh, the naughty boy—
He sent his cruel dart,
And here it poisons all my joy.
And rankles in my heart.

"The dearest friend of yore,
Is all indifferent grown;
The talk which pleased, can please no more—
For I love only one.'

"Nay, nay, don't send me to plough—and I'll tell Mrs. Maude the name in seven seconds—E-VE-RARD."

"Sir Everard!—that very fair young gentleman, whom we saw at the Lord Vaux's last Martinmas!" exclaimed Mrs. Maude. "Nay, but in good sooth, I hope that young cavalier hath not really hurt himself to the breaking of a bone."

"He hath—he hath broken a bone—he hath fractured his arm, for so I heard Dr. Caius decide."

"What a lamentable accident!"

"Lamentable as an old love-ditty—ain't it, Ma-

donna?" again looking under her face, as she bent her head down to her work.

" 'Nay crystal drops run down—
And pearl this cheek of mine. . . . '

But you needn't cry, there's no great harm done."

He looked out of the window.

" Now come hither, fair Maude—bring thy venerable beauty to the place wherein I stand, and descry and say, who are those coming slowly up the bank yonder.

" 'The lady looked north, the lady looked south,
O'er hill, and stream, and tower,—
And she was aware of the goodly youth,
Coming sounding up to her bower.'

" Sounding won't do though, say tottering rather."

" Nay, Madonna, never mind me—Pray make no ceremonies—Come to the window—I don't care a rush whether I see him or not;—Why do you sit stitching away there?—and all because you wouldn't take the poor fool's place for the world, because he got it first: don't make bones of it, I pray—here—you'll see him very well."

She lifted up her shoulder, and put up her lip, as if his nonsense had at last got the better of her patience.

He saw that he had said more than enough, and turning away from her, singing in a low, subdued voice,

" ' Call unto his funeral dole,
The ant, the field mouse, and the mole,
To raise him hillocks that shall keep him warm,' "

he looked out of the window, where Mrs. Maude had already planted herself.

" He's there for certain," said the good lady, " that

very same fair young gentleman that we met at Harroden Magna last Michaelmas. And he's just as tall and slender, and handsome, as he was then; save that he's all covered over with mire, and he walks very stooping, and as if he was all broken to pieces, and I don't think he'd stand if he hadn't Mr. Mulsho's arm."

"Is my father there?" said Evelyn.

"Aye, marry is he, lady, and many other gentlemen, all a-coming slowly round the trees by the church," said Mrs. Maude.

While Fabian leaned out of the window as far as he could stretch, a cheerful voice from below summoned him; on which he drew in, and affecting to be in a prodigious hurry, with as many grimaces as he could possibly invent, scuttled out of the room.

When he was gone, and the door fairly closed after him, and not till then, Evelyn rose from her chair, and without moving from her place, endeavoured to catch a glimpse of the group which was slowly advancing up the lawn before the house.

Whether she succeeded in catching the figure of Everard, as supported by the arm of Mr. Mulsho, he with great difficulty made his way along, is not quite certain.

Presently she sat down again, resumed her needle, and asked Mrs. Maude to read to her from the "Jerusalem" of Tasso.

Good old Maude began to read the scene of "Erminia among the Shepherds," and while the young lady's fingers plied her work, she peopled those shades, so

sweetly described, with figures of her own country Erminia was no longer alone. Under the wide-spreading beech trees, which looked in her small picture marvellously like the beech woods of Goddeshurst there she sat, and there sat Tancred himself by her side, with his fine oval face, his dark blue eye, his sweet and truthful countenance—looking so wonderfully like Everard, that it would have been impossible to have known them asunder.

CHAPTER VIII.

" His qualities were beauteous as his form,
For maiden-tongued he was and therefore free ;
His real habitude gave life and grace
To appertainings and to ornament."

THE young man had certainly broken his arm, and he had likewise been struck severely upon the chest, before he could be disentangled from his terrified and struggling horse; who, his beautiful white coat bespattered with the mire, and his large full eye and nostrils distended with terror, strove with chest and hoof to disengage himself from the dreadful abyss into which he was sinking.

The young cavalier, unhorsed in the struggle, had lain sometime almost under the feet of the animal, and was with much difficulty rescued from destruction. His head swimming, his arm broken, his frame too exquisitely sensitive to physical suffering, all shaken and in disorder, he was happy to accept Mr. Mulsho's invitation, and accompany him to Goddeshurst, that being the nearest mansion at hand, and to put himself under the care of the venerable Dr. Caius.

Dizzy he was, and his thoughts a good deal confused; but not for that did he forget to whom Mr. Mulsho was father; and his heart beat fast, and added considerably by its agitation to the general disorder of his feelings as he

approached that house where the divinity of his affections dwelt.

Everard was the grandson of a man who had distinguished himself in arms, and served under the two preceding reigns, and during the earlier years of the present queen. His father had died without coming to the succession, and Everard, still under age, found himself the heir of a considerable property in Rutlandshire, and the representative of a noble, time-honoured house, which had maintained itself virtuous and respected through successive generations, and through all the struggles and contentions, political and religious, of the two last centuries. When I say noble, I do not, however, mean actually belonging to the nobility, for of that order he was not, though he might have well adorned any order.

He was, as he has been described, remarkably handsome, of the gentlest and most engaging manners; accomplished in all knightly exercises; able, judicious, and temperate above his years, yet with a heart capable of the most fervent affections; he was brave, generous, disinterested, and good; sweet-tempered, and confiding as a child.

Such was Everard—the portrait is no ideal one.

Such he *was*.

Such was the Tancred of our gentle Erminia.

An Erminia not unworthy of his choice.

The disposal of his fair and richly-endowed daughter

in marriage, had lately, as has been mentioned before, become a source of very painful interest to Mr. Mulsho.

Among the young gentlemen with whom he came in contact, he could not find one that at all fulfilled the conditions to which he aspired. The tone of the young people about him had evidently declined considerably within the last few years, since the religious men from the seminaries abroad had exercised such an evil influence over their education.

The system of concealment, of secret intrigue, of falsehood and deceit, which was rendered necessary by their practices against the existing government—the loose ideas upon the most important principles of morals, which were infused by their casuistical writers, especially those fundamental ones upon the subject of secret assassination, and that disregard for the first principles of truth which deform their writings—had given to Mr. Mulsho a dread and distrust of almost every one about him; and it was not till he met with Everard, that he had found one single person, in the least answering his requisitions as to the character of the man on whom he should bestow his daughter.

He knew him to be a personal favourite of that great queen who so very rarely was mistaken in her favourites, and that, though at present conforming to the Catholic religion of his house and family, he had been brought up a Protestant; and he trusted that sound principles must thus have been early imbibed, which might render him proof against the dangerous casuistry, the secret infidelity, or the wild bigotry and superstition which surrounded him. It was with a smile of benevolent pleasure

that he had seen him dashing forward with a sensibility so little to have been expected at his age, his day, to rescue the poor jaded victim of the day, and with considerable satisfaction, when he perceived the extent of the accident, had he offered his assistance, and the best cares of Dr. Caius to the man.

And it would be difficult to say whether the sick and fainting though he was, the good and kind father, or the fair Evelyn herself, received satisfaction, as the two gentlemen slowly mounted the ascent and entered the hospitable door of George together.

Day followed after day, and time with his footsteps glided by, and the intimacy between the two people thus thrown together, was ripening into a far stronger and more enduring sentiment, and Mr. Mulsho watched his guest with anxious solicitude; but he found every day fresh reason, as he increased, to rely upon the favourable impression he had received, and to rejoice in the happy accident which had occurred.

CHAPTER IX.

"Sweet be the bands, the which true love doth tie
Without constraint, or dread of any ill."

THERE was a pleasant garden at the back of Goddes-hurst, situated upon the gentle hill which rises behind the house; the huge oak and elm trees forming as it were a frame for this wilderness of flowers, berceaus and alleys of topiary work, that succeeded each other in such pleasant confusion; and the birds were singing gaily, and all nature in her most smiling trim, when Everard and Evclyn, strolling through a little postern door, walked there together.

Her fair head bending downwards, her eyes seeking the earth, plucking a flower to pieces which she held in her hand, she walked by his side and listened to his pleasant talk.

He was telling her of what he had seen at the court of the magnificent old queen, which she had but once visited. Of the grand progress in which he had been engaged to Kenninghall in Norfolk; of the splendour with which the royal guest had been received; of the masques and other diversions with which she had been greeted, and of her affable demeanour and popular carriage to all. "But it was marred at last to me," he said, "by what befel my poor friend Rookwood.

Does Mrs. Evelyn recollect young Rookwood, at Harroden: he is something perhaps of a simple youth, and has certainly little of the courtier in his composition, but he did his best. The queen came upon him all unawares; there was scarcely time for preparation; but he made wonderful exertions, and we all thought must have possessed the enchanter's wand, or the wondrous ring of Candace, so quickly did he gather all providings around him. There was no scant of liberal housekeeping at Euston Hall. The queen seemed pleased with such entertainment as he could offer, and my poor friend was in the seventh heaven—for few of us can resist a royal smile, fair Evelyn—and what royal smile is so benign, so gracious, as is hers—when the sun shines? But what avails,” he continued, with a generous indignation in his tone, “her best inclinations, when sneaking wretches are allowed to *Topcliff-zare* about her, searching out all manner of occasions to breed offence; when it would be her royal pleasure to wink at what she cannot but in her secret soul approve—adherence to conscience?”

“I remember the young gentleman well,” said Evelyn: “he was such as you paint him—somewhat soft, and rather bustling, and officious in his manner; but honest and good-natured, I thought.”

“Poor Rookwood!—I think I see him there, as he knelt, cap in hand, before the grand old queen, in his rich suit, which he had prepared for the occasion; black velvet, all slashed and garnished with cloth of gold;—and her majesty standing before him in all her bravery;—he looked as if he could barely support the glance

of her eagle eye: but he bent down his head and kissed the fair hand all sparkling with jewels, which she graciously extended to him, and she was courteously thanking him for his good fare, while he stammered out excuses for his ill house—when—my heart really bled for him, Evelyn, it did in truth—as we, on our parts, stood round rejoicing in this good augury of reconciliation—as the queen passed on, and poor Rookwood, colouring with pride and pleasure, was rising from his knee, comes up my Lord Chamberlain looking pale with anger, and seizing him by the shoulder as if he had been the veriest caitiff upon earth, asks him before them all—how he, being excommunicated for popery, dared to attempt her royal presence?—adding, he was fitter for a pair of stocks than for such honour as that, and commanding him to leave the court, and not presume to appear again before his queen. My heart was ready to burst with rage and pity. But I held my peace: I knew it was *not* the queen's pleasure—and that these men waited till she was gone before they dared to make so barbarous a return for the poor fellow's well-intended hospitality."

"Alas!" said Evelyn, sadly, "poor young gentleman! But how comes this to pass, Sir Everard; you, and numbers like you, are allowed to pay your court; what had this poor young gentleman done?"

"I fear the poor fellow is given to old and useless superstitions," said the young man—"but what of that? Are the secret chambers of men's homes and consciences to be rifled at the will of any one who

listens to the delations of that vile informer, Topcliffe, creeping to men's ears, and poisoning them with his slanders! I could have taken the wretch by the neck, and twisted it with pleasure—forgive me," said he, endeavouring to restrain the heat into which he had been betrayed, "forgive me—but these things go hard with us all."

Evelyn sighed—then looked up at the face glowing with generous indignation, and said—

"If the evil but ended here!. . . . I hope Mr. Rookwood will have patience, and forgive it. My father says that we must all of us learn to practise that holy command—and forgive, even as we would be forgiven."

"Fair virtue," said he, "thou sayest right—yet are these injuries hard to bear. Methinks if this had fallen upon a sterner or a wiser man I could have borne it—upon our friend Robert, for instance—but in this case it seems to me as if they had struck at a child. Rookwood is so simple-hearted—could any thing be more simple-hearted than his excessive ambition to entertain this great queen at his house at Euston Hall: which is to him like a new plaything. All the pains he took—all the engines he set at work to carry this grand object—he hoped it would be a means of bringing him to court, poor fellow: and so it might have been, had not that villanous spy found matter of accusation against him, from his very frank-heartedness, which led him to open his house to all. It is true there were many things he had put away—which, perchance, had better never have been there."

"I hope," said she, "his afflictions ended with his

disappointment and mortification; and that there was no further cause given for dissatisfaction to the Catholic gentlemen."

"Unhappily—unhappily," said he, shaking his head, and walking faster, as if unable to resist the irritation of his feelings—"unhappily much more. Though forbidden the court, he was commanded to attend the council's pleasure—and at Norwich he was committed for what reason I could not discover; it could not be because, when the rabble rout scoured his house, a silver image of the blessed Virgin was found in his hayrick. . . . They could not commit him for that—it might be madness and folly, in such times as these, to harbour such a thing—but treason or disaffection it could never be . . . There is something in all this, more than I can understand."

"Yours is a painful conclusion," said the young lady, pensively, "to a story that opened so pleasantly. The queen's progress must have had a gloomy termination."

"I think it had—and I hope it had. It is true she suffered the figure of that blessed type of womanhood, to be burned and insulted over by the common herd, and that before her face—but, she looked, methought, grave, dissatisfied, and displeased all the while; and as if she would have forbidden the profanation, could she have ventured so to do. She, like the rest of us, must yield to circumstances; and brave as she looks, I question whether she can follow her royal will in all things; the times are too hard for every one."

"Ah !" said Evelyn, lifting up her sweet eyes to him, "when will these fierce contentions cease ?"

"They will cease, fair creature, when men become wise, and temperate, and disinterested, as your honoured father ; and women gentle, and rational, as his lovely daughter," said the young man tenderly—"but alas ! when will that be ?"

"You were staying at Great Harroden, were you not, when you rode over to join this great hunting match, at which your jacket suffered so terribly ?" she went on to say.

"Yes."

"Were they all there ?"

"I do not know who you call *all*," said he. "There was the usual family party—the beautiful Grace—and my Lady Vaux, her mother ; and there was Robert and Tresham, and Eleanor, and myself."

"And how is Grace, and how is Eleanor ?"

"Grace is more beautiful, and more pensive, and more silent and reserved than ever—and Robert is more desperate, and more in love ;—his wild pranks would exceed your belief, fair recluse, for his passion shows itself in the utmost extravagancies. Surely not the way to win the gentle votary's heart."

"Grace is so pious—so self-denying—so excellent," said Evelyn: "almost too excellent for this world my father says: he warns me from being too much attracted by this lovely devotee—and yet she is *very* attractive."

"To me there is a chilling coldness about her," said the young man. "I have no sympathy with such

thoughts. I cannot believe, and I do not believe, that this beautiful world was created so full of enjoyment—not to be enjoyed. When I contrast Goddeshurst and Harroden Magna, the gloom and mystery which hangs about the one, and the cheerfulness which animates the other, I seem as if I were in two different worlds ; and surely we are taught that the kingdom of light is the kingdom of Heaven ; and that darkness is the inheritance of the bad spirits. I do not know what there is about Harroden Magna—but it is a region insupportable to me.”

“I think I feel something in the same way,” said she. “I do not know how it is, but if I were as superstitious as poor Mrs. Maude, I should believe that house was haunted ; and that a sort of malignant influence was hanging over it. I, like you, cannot breathe easily there. And I have heard such strange creeping sounds behind the arras—low suppressed breathings, and cautious footsteps—I could have fancied I know not what. I hate that gloomy withdrawing-room, with its dark tapestry, and its high narrow stained-glass windows: and Lady Vaux is rather terrible: but then Grace is a saint and an angel.”

He looked somewhat annoyed at the first part of this speech, and as if he would fain change the conversation.

“Grace is inconceivably beautiful,” he said, “too beautiful indeed—for she will prove the ruin I fear of one of the noblest-hearted of human beings. Poor Rookwood could scarcely have regarded his silver

Madonna with looks more adoring than Robert directs to the object of his worship... But it is all in vain."

"You seem very much attached to Robert," remarked the young lady. "I suppose he possesses some qualities that are altogether hidden from me. I should say he was a man rather to be feared than loved."

"You mistake him altogether."

"His countenance is so peculiar—there is something so passionate, so determined in his brow and in his eye—so very unlike other men—he makes me shudder sometimes when I look at him, as if some one had walked over my grave."

"It is questionless a very remarkable countenance," replied Everard, "I never saw such another: but to me it bears the grandest and most interesting of expressions—invincible force, and inexhaustible feeling."

"And yet, he has such strange wild fits and humours. Do you remember that terrible wild goose chase* which he rode against Mr. Markham? I never saw any thing so shocking I think. I never shall forget the horses as they went out, and the poor creatures as they came in. He rode quite savagely—it was a terrible sight—and a horse, too, that had carried him for years, and that so bravely and so well. How it arched its neck and bent its beautiful head to his hand, as he patted and caressed it!—and when he sprang into his saddle, he stroked it quite fondly—and then—his spurs—to the

* The wild goose chase of that day was not like the steeple chase of ours; it consisted in two horses starting together, and he who proved the hindmost rider was obliged to follow the foremost over whatever ground he chose to carry him.

rowels—and off like wind down the steeps and over the plain, as if he were the wild huntsman himself: spurring and slashing: and that horrid Mr. Markham after him, upon his fine horse too—but it was not such a loving animal as Robert's. Oh! it was a hateful sight!”

“I don't like a wild goose chase myself, fair Evelyn—but men will be men: we must allow something for the immense excitement: and then Robert detests that Markham, and he defied him to the match—because Markham thinks he knows more of horsemanship than all the rest of the world besides, and Robert, who does all things well, and cares not for the distinction, was nettled at the coxcomb.”

“And so he killed his beautiful horse—his friend as one may call it,” said Evelyn, with indignation. “Oh! sir, even can *you* excuse such barbarity?”

“Excuse it, no—I merely mean to say that I understand it. I am not so good and gentle as you are—I understand the feeling, but forgive me and don't blame me. I do not mean to justify it. I merely mean to say that I understand it.”

“Do you?” said she, slightly sighing, and looking at him wistfully.

“Nay,” said he, fondly bending over her, gratified beyond measure at that little sigh—“if *you* say it is wrong—I will think it wrong, and even in Robert, I will not attempt to excuse it.”

“*Even* in Robert!—how strange—that the same man should appear so differently to two people, who in

many things think so alike—even Robert! To me it seems that with all his fine qualities, Robert has more faults to be excused in him, than most of us.”

“He is passionate and impetuous,” said his friend; “but he is ever noble, disinterested, and daring. He is of the stuff of which the noble order of martyrs was made,” added he, slightly crossing himself, “and the patron saints of England and of Spain.”

“Spain! oh let nothing we love be like Spain!” cried Evelyn, with a slight shudder.

He looked at her surprised.

“My father says,” she continued, “that Spain has been the greatest enemy our country or our holy religion ever had—temperate as he is, my father almost anathematizes Spain.”

“He assembled his tenants and retainers I know, and came forth like a brave and a good man, to defend his queen and country at the time of the Armada,” said Everard. “I was a mere child then—but I remember I prepared my little cross-bow, resolved to send a bolt against the common enemy—but enemy as he was to my country, I have ever thought the Spaniard the bulwark of our holy religion.”

“My father has taught me not to think so,” was her only reply, for she was little skilled in and little inclined to controversy; but she had heard of the Inquisition, and she recoiled in secret at the very name of Spain.

These two did not it seems think exactly alike, but that appeared to be of no importance; they continued

to walk up and down together, and to exchange their thoughts with all the sincerity of their age and character.

The young man drinking in fresh draughts, as it were, of love, from that gentle voice and those serene eyes; and the young lady quite unsuspecting the danger she was incurring, listening to his voice, and gazing by stealth at his animated and beautiful countenance.

Everard at different intervals spent much time at Godshurst, which seemed to him like a sort of sanctuary of peace and happiness. The conversation and example of Mr. Mulsho, were acting in the most favourable manner upon his character; restoring him again to those temperate maxims in which he had been educated; and renewing the feelings of attachment for his queen, and the political institutions of his country, which certain associations had of late considerably impaired.

In the meantime, the affection between himself and the fair Evelyn was rapidly increasing, though at present he had not regularly disclosed it to her father:—he was yet in his wardship, and felt that he was still under the power of others; and he waited till the few months should elapse, which must intervene before he came of age, in order to declare his passion.

In the meantime, the other members of the household were not idle, as far as surmises, consulting of oracles, and hints and inuendoes went.

Fabian amused himself, with the permitted impertinence of his office, in tormenting the lovers, by his endless odds and ends of rhyme and reason.

And poor Mrs. Maude, who was the veriest slave of superstition that ever lived in those most superstitious days, tried to penetrate into the future, by every means that charm, omen, or divination of any kind could furnish.

The answers were such as to fill her sage mind with uneasiness. Whatsoever the charm applied, the omen observed, the divination consulted, the answers were invariably sinister and alarming.

On these subjects she and Fabian, who was as incredulous upon these matters as she was believing, had numerous confabulations together.

She would bemoan herself incessantly about that unlucky fall from his horse,* which had been the means of introducing Sir Everard into the mansion; and would assert, that as she stood at the window watching his approach, she saw the brindled cat run across the walk just before his feet, and pass between him and Mr. Mulsho.†

“And thou knowest, boy, though thou art but a fool, that if a child or being in breath of life, pass between two that are walking together, side by side—such sign denoteth a division of friendship. And only think! it would break that dainty lamb’s heart, should any thing fall out between them twain. He shed the salt, too, as he was handing some to the fair Evelyn.”

“He was certainly a whit awkward that day, and in a greater hurry of the spirit than suits a gallant such as

* The fall from a horse before entering a house was considered the worst of omens.

† A child or animal passing between two friends walking together was sure to betoken a division of friendship.

he. Nevertheless, I'll hold to the true divination of the heart against all your foolish and heathenish charms and omens, Mrs. Maude.

'For St. George, St. George, our lady's knight,
Whenever he walketh he walks aright,
He met the night-mare, and her nine fold,
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,
And anoint thee witch, anoint thee.'"

"What has that stuff to do with it?" said the old lady, contemptuously: "besides, you didn't hear what happened to them both yesterday."

"Not I, mistress—I was out with Mr. Warner.

'Let them that list these nonsens then pursue,
And on their crooked fancies feed their fill,
So I the fields and meadows green may view,
And by the rivers fresh may walk at will.'

Marry, good Mrs. Maude, and it would be better for you if your fair hand were angling

'For eager bite of barbel, bleak, or dace,'

rather than hanging out baits for Satan and all his imps to come and torment us in this fashion."

"Very well," said she, angrily; "and you don't choose to hear. I can keep my tale to myself."

But Fabian was not quite so exempt from curiosity as he affected to appear, and so he came close up to her, fixed his sharp twinkling eyes upon her face, and prepared to listen with a grotesque face of gravity.

"I won't speak to you, fool," said she, "while you pull those ridiculous faces."

"And pray, madam, what is my vocation in this nether world, but to make a fool of myself? Yet, still,

if thy lamentable tale demand a lamentable face, here goes . . . "And making as if he would be really dolorous, he sat down on the ground at her feet.

"You know the walk through the wood, and down by the sleepy hollow," began Mrs. Maude.

"A very lonesome, ugly, dismal path, as ever I took in my life; and why and wherefore, when there are so many paths to be chosen in life, some people must always choose sleepy hollows, —I never could divine: but go on. What did you find in the horrid hole? an old raven or a headless cow? I wonder you go to such bewitched places all by yourself, Mrs. Maude."

"I was not by myself. I was attending upon Mrs. Evelyn, and the young cavalier."

"And what in the name of St. Withhold, led them there?" asked Fabian. "Are they bewitched too—that they must go into such wicked places as that? They may meet with something worse than headless cows, and croaking ravens, if they go wandering about in that foolish fashion."

"They were walking along side by side, and talking in the way they are so wont to do."

"Aye, aye—"

"And suddenly there was a rustling in the bushes, and out steps before us, right in the middle of the path, such a horrid, withered-looking hag! Her face was as tawny as an Ethiops, and hair all hanging in black elf locks around her cheeks. She had on a tattered dress, of as many colours as the patriarch Joseph's coat: and she croaked like the night raven, as she said—

“ ‘Should she tell them their fortunes?’

“ ‘Are you an Egyptian?’ asked the young gentleman; ‘for you look like one, and I have heard say they can spell fortunes, and have skill in palmistry; here’s a tester to cross your hand. Let us have the young lady’s fortune first—won’t you, sweet Evelyn? Indulge me.

“She drew off her glove, and exposed her pretty white palm—and the old witch began to pore at it, and crumple it in all sorts of ways. At first she smiled—and then she fetched a sort of groan, and she said—

“ ‘What’s this?’—looking at her more kindly and sorrowfully than I should have thought such a witch could have looked. ‘There’s blood in your line of life.’

“Fair Mrs. Evelyn gave a little start—then coloured, drew her hand away, and shut it close.

“ ‘Let me see yours, young sir,’ said the witch.

“He opened it to encourage Mrs. Evelyn, as I thought, for he seemed sorry she had been shocked so.

“ ‘You two must not come together,’ screeched the beldame—‘there’s blood—again—your line of life has blood in it.’

“ ‘Don’t have him, lady—Ay—ay’—shaking her head, ‘you’ve a bonny blink in your fair blue eye—but don’t have him, lady, don’t have him, lady—his line of life is *flooded* with blood.’ And taking her tester, she turned short round, and before we knew where we were, she was gone into the thicket again.”

Fabian would fain have laughed, as was his custom, at Mrs. Maude’s terrible stories;—but he could not—

a cold shiver ran through his veins at these frightful words.

Suddenly a loud noise, as of something falling overhead, was heard.

"What's that?" cried he, starting up.

"A warning," said Maude, turning very pale, "the chamber is empty, and here is the key." *

* A noise, as of something falling in an empty chamber, was a warning of coming death.

CHAPTER X.

" I would they were gone,
For among us is none
That ruleth but they alone."

Shelton.

THERE is in the gardens of Goddeshurst a dark walk, walled and roofed with close cut yew ; it leads from the house to the more distant gardens.

Its green bowers effectually exclude the sun, and yet the air penetrates through the leafy screen, and gives a pleasant freshness ; rendering this kind of sylvan gallery particularly grateful in this, our changeable climate ; a shelter alike against the bleak east wind of March, and the glowing mid-day beams of a July sun.

Mr. Mulsho was walking here with another gentleman, who was considerably older than himself, and evidently a churchman. There was something in the appearance of churchmen in those days not easily to be mistaken, even when they wore, as this gentleman did, the secular habit.

The aged priest—for very aged he was—was one of that description of churchmen before alluded to, as known among the Catholics by the name of the " Old," or " Queen Mary's Priests ;" who formed a very striking contrast in their views and principles to the new men—the Seminarists and Jesuits, red hot from Douay, and from Rheims.

The views of Mr. Mulsho were so moderate, that when, as was the case with many other gentlemen of his persuasion, he attended his parish church in conformity to the law ; it could scarcely be called an act of submission upon his part. He was one who had long in secret rejoiced in the emancipation of his country from the thralldom of the Roman Pontiff—a thralldom which had excited the jealousy of patriotic Englishmen long before the Reformation was thought of. And though he could not in all things conform to the doctrines of the newly established church, yet there was so much in its discipline and opinions which he found reason to approve, that he had never experienced any conscientious difficulty in obeying the statute.

The old priest, Mr. Warner, had in great measure adopted the principles of his friend. Peace between the warring churches was the secret aspiration of his soul—like Lord Falkland, he only sighed for peace. He loved his country, he loved the old Saxon faith of his ancestors, detested ultramontane and Spanish principles, and sighed, as an old man sighs, over the torrent of new teachers, new doctrines, and new ways of thinking and acting, which, setting in like a flood, threatened to overwhelm society.

“ I confess, my friend,” Mr. Mulsho was saying, “ the times appear to me to darken. I fear that hopes which you and I, my venerable counsellor, have for so many years cherished—hoping against hope—are about to fade away. This old queen, who keeps us all in awe and order, cannot last for ever—and after her what are we to expect?”

The old man made no answer for some time: the lines of melancholy thought were on his brow, slightly shaded by a few silver hairs, and his mild eye was bent upon the ground he was pacing.

"I could prophecy," at last he said: "it seems as if in the twilight of age, shadows and forms of things dimly appear, which are lost in the glare of day. This church will *not* triumph—by ways so crooked, none ever yet advanced: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and her enemies count her stones! who shall tell what is next to succeed? The darkness is gathering—the wind is howling—the sky is troubled—the tempest is at hand: when extremes meet, when clouds from opposite quarters of the heavens rush together, then the thunder-bolt falls."

"It is an ominous conjunction," said Mr. Mulsho, "but I should give a less figurative account of the catastrophe. When extremes in politics or religion meet, the thing which perishes is *principle*. 'I saw, Satan, as lightning, fall from Heaven'—Your thunder bolt, Mr. Warner."

"You are wiser than I am," said the old man. "I am but a poor visionary after all. I have indulged in dreams of unattainable good, and my hopes are disappointed. I had hoped that men would, in spite of their differences, learn again to love one another—to regard each other as brethren—not as fellow combatants merely . . . What folly!"

"A romance, indeed, I fear," replied his friend, "to which that of *Tristram*, or the *Lady of the Lake*, is as an every day tale."

“ Ah! sir, what a scene of contention is this world become,” said the old man, shuddering, “ the fires I saw blazing in my youth, yet smoulder in their ashes—and in other countries are blazing still. Sir, at an *auto-da-fé*, a few months only ago, at Madrid, sixty and five human creatures perished at once. Oh! sir, the fires in England made me what I am—by their light I learned to see what an accursed thing an exclusive religion is. I learned to reverence ways of thinking different from my own—when I stood by and witnessed the martyrdom of those holy victims to sincerity. But miserable as we are—sin is born of sin—cruelty begets cruelty—barbarity is the offspring of barbarity. Alas! for our own government, so mild, so equitable in the outset: so severe and cruel as it is become!”

“ Let us at least be just,” said Mr. Mulsho, “ with the prophet of old let us say—‘ Has there not been a cause?’ This last arrest, which has excited such fearful resentment among our Catholic friends, what is it but the bitter fruit of seeds of their own scattering.”

Mr. Warner sighed.

“ They will be condemned, it is said—and oh! when will the laws cease in their enactments to be so fearfully cruel, as to excite the interest of all men on the part of the criminal?”

“ When, indeed!—But let us leave this painful subject: I wished to speak of matters nearer home—of my daughter—of this young man. You should be better acquainted with the tempers and characters of the young Catholic gentlemen around us than I can be. Am I right

in my impressions?—Is he one to whom in these difficult times I can intrust my Evelyn?”

“My vocation is well nigh ended,” said Mr. Warner. “I know nothing of the young.”

“The more the pity.”

“His grandfather was a brave and honourable man—wise in counsel and mighty in battle; he comes of a good stock; I have known them long and well.”

“He looks as if he would be no disgrace to his family,” said Mr. Mulsho. But the countenance of the priest expressed a painful doubt and uncertainty.

“We know little of any of them now,” he said. “Truth is become a jest—good faith a fable; we know not what any man really is now.”

The father’s heart sank within him.

“And in such a world must I leave thee, my child?”

“No, no,” said Mr. Warner, “the saints in heaven forbid! My task is well nigh ended; but may you, my honoured friend, live long, for thy poor child will need thee.”

“It will not be,” replied Mr. Mulsho. “What I say I feel to be a truth, my days on earth are counted; I must leave you all soon; but before I depart, fain would I place my Evelyn where she will be sheltered from the storms which appear to me to be impending; and this young man seems the only one on whom my thoughts can rest with any satisfaction.”

To this Mr. Warner made no reply.

Another sigh from Mr. Mulsho.

He seemed oppressed with a vague presentiment of

evil, but endeavouring to shake it off, he said, with an endeavour to be more cheerful,

“It would seem as if we had lost our faith in human kind.”

Mr. Warner shook his head.

“Trust me, sir, of the present way of teaching in the church no good can or will come—as well expect to gather figs of thistles. This generation will not pass away without some fearful example of this truth—that as is the tree so will be its fruit. Immure your daughter in a convent if you will. Consecrate her to the services of her religion, but trust her not among the sons of men in the days which are before us.

“My dear friend,” said Mr. Mulsho, for what appeared to him as the almost unreasonable despondency on the part of Mr. Warner acted, as such things most often do, in making his own terrors appear unreasonable: “this is a serious view of things indeed, but on that one subject my mind is made up. My child shall not enter a convent—no, no. Times are bad, but not quite so bad as you represent them. Shall we not trust this young man? and moreover Evelyn—”

“Loves him already,” said the old man: “all is said—*fiat voluntas dei.*”

And bowing his head with an air of submission he went away.

He could no longer oppose a marriage, which to all appearance was so advantageous in every respect—yet he could not dispel the disquieting suspicions which filled his old man’s heart: while Mr. Mulsho

remained, in spite of the determination to which he had come, in a state of painful disquiet and dissatisfaction, which he vainly strove to overcome.

Such were the anxieties of those days.

CHAPTER XI.

“ The trees of God, without the care
Or art of man with sap are fed ;
The mountain cedar looks as fair
As those in royal gardens bred.”

Ps. 104.

THE next day was the first of May.

And a charming May-day morning it was. The sun rose bright and cloudless, tinting the oak woods in their new livery of green and crimson and gold : while birds innumerable were warbling in the branches, and the flowers were giving out their sweetest odours around.

Such was the morning when Evelyn Mulsho, like Emily in the flower and leaf, rose with the dawn, prepared to greet and do honour to the lovely May.

She, too, like every maiden high and low, in these romantic times, must go forth early and gather

“ Flowers fresh, and branch, and blome,
The primrose, the violet, and the gold,
With fresh garlants, party-blue and white.”

Before daybreak there was a general stir in the house ; every page and groom, every serving maid of every degree, from the two young girls who attended upon Evelyn, to the lowest scullion in the kitchen, all must go forth upon the same pleasant errand. Fabian might be heard parading the house, singing merrily at the top of his voice, the madrigal by Morley :

‘ Now is the month of Maying ;
And all the lads are playing ;

And every bonny lass,
Trips over the greeny grass.

“The spring clad all in gladness,
Doth laugh at winter’s sadness;
And to the tabor’s sound,
The nymph’s tread out the ground.”

The air, indeed, resounded with music. The merry pipe and tabor, and the sound of the lads and lasses singing, was heard in the woods and over the hills. Nothing could be more full of those delights which a communication with nature in all her freshness gives, than May morning as it was kept by our ancestors. Their passionate love for the fields and the woods, for gardens, greens, and flowers, was on that day indulged in its fullest extent.

Every one went out upon these occasions, from the queen herself with the ladies of court to the humblest of the peasant maidens: and each one returned home loaded with the vernal spoils, with which they decked their doors and windows, and made garlands to hang upon the May pole. This last decked with abundance of flowers, silver cups and tankards, and flaunting with ribbons, was reared with many ceremonies upon the village green, and stood there in all its glory, awaiting the dances which were to celebrate its erection, as the evening approached.

“On the calends of May,” says a quaint author, “the juvenile part of both sexes were wont to rise a little after midnight, and walk to some neighbouring wood, accompanied with music and the blowing of horns, where they break down branches of trees, adorning them with nosegays and crowns of flowers,—when

this is done, they return with their booty homewards, about the rising of the sun, and make their doors and windows to triumph in the flowery spoils. The other part of the day is spent in dancing round a poll—which is called a May poll, which being placed in a convenient part of the village, stands there, as it were, dedicated to the Goddess of Flowers.”

She had put on her hood and scarf, and followed by her two maidens, trusty Mrs. Maude, and Fabian, who never left her when he could help it, with a little osier basket in her hand, was tripping gaily down stairs, when she was met by Everard, who, roused by the voice of the boy, had risen, and stood prepared to attend his fair one upon her sylvan ramble.

He addressed her in the words of Herrick, a favourite poet of the day, as he took her hand in his:

“ May I be of your company,
May I too come forth to see,
The dew drops spangling flower and tree.
How flowers have wept, and bowed towards the earth,
It were sin ;
Nay, profanation to keep in.”

“ We are very simple people here, sir,” said she gaily, “ and are content with mere rural pleasures; but for a court gallant like you—I am afraid spoiling my father’s thickets and breaking down hawthorn bushes will be but very small amusement.”

The young gentleman, however, looked quite young enough to enjoy any mischief of the sort; and quite in love enough he certainly was, to enjoy any thing with her.

“ Let me carry this for you,” said he, taking her

basket, "and then I shall appear, what in good truth I am, your most devoted servant and slave."

They sallied forth, followed by her attendants, and were soon wandering among the pleasant woods and copses which now resounded with the merry songs of the revellers, and sparkled in the rising sun, every dew drop being a tiny rainbow.

At first, they busied themselves like the rest, gathering flowers, but they soon left this amusement to others, and strolled together along the wide green alleys cut for hunting purposes, never weary of that sweet communion of feeling and exchange of thought which forms the delight of lovers.

The dinner of the gentry was at that time served about ten or eleven o'clock, those of the lower classes dined later—about one.

The young people returned to dinner with Mr. Mulsho; Evelyn and her maidens decked the porch and windows with their spoils, till the great hall looked like a bower of May flowers. Fabian and Everard were agreeably busied in assisting; they made a sort of canopy for Evelyn, and placed a gilt arm-chair for her state. And there she sat, looking very lovely, amid the showy hawthorn branches which hung about her.

Everard sat at her feet and Fabian on the other side, singing in an under voice his snatches of old songs, and making those sly allusions to the present supposed situation of her heart—a tolerated liberty in those days, but a species of jesting which would be deemed insupportable in these.

Mr. Mulsho and Mr. Warner, engaged in conversation, walked up and down the hall.

The good old priest, in spite of his forebodings, could not help looking with pleasure at the little group; and as he walked up and down, his eyes fixed upon the ground, his lips were murmuring invocations to all the saints for their happiness.

Mr. Mulsho relieved—as all men more or less are when they have come to a decision—smiled as he watched them.

It was a pleasant day for them all.

He now came up to the place where his daughter was sitting, laughing, and chatting in her pleasant way, at some of the apothegms of a jester's philosophy, which fell from Fabian; while Everard, not engaged in the war of wits, was gazing silently upon her face, wondering whether any limner from Italy could do justice to its colour or expression.

“My dear,” said Mr. Mulsho, “the clock has just gone two, and it is time we should walk down and show ourselves in the village. These good people, who are tripping it so merrily round their May-pole, will be disappointed if we do not as usual go down to the Morris dance. Come, sir,” turning to Everard, “are you for Robinhood and Maid Marian? I assure you you will find Friar Tuck a pleasanter fellow than this goose Fabian here, who grows tedious.”

“Alas,” said the boy, “the jester's part is well nigh played out, and that makes me lack-a-daisical nuncle; man grows duller and heavier as his race runs on, and every generation is born, as I think, the father instead

of the child of that which went before it. Mrs. Evelyn there is as wise as Mr. Warner, though she is but sixteen, and already regards the toys of a poor jester's wit, as that wise man looks on a hobby-horse,

‘And oh, and oh, the hobby-horse is forgot.’

Men are getting too learned to be merry, and the black cloak of the puritan will soon cover the gaud of the fools.”

“You grow prosy, sir,” said Mr. Mulsho. “We don't use to have long sententious nothings from you—your business is to be brief and pithy.”

“Ay, like a puritan's discourse in the pulpit—heigh, master?—Well, well—we are but the children of our day—the best of us: and the day of words is coming: we are like to have more words than matter by and by, sir.”

“Perhaps so,” said Mr. Mulsho; “but get along, and open the door, and tell Mrs. Lettice and Mrs. Alice to bring their young lady's scarf and hood, and follow us to the village.”

They soon crossed the lawn and the few fields that separated them from the little assemblage of houses, where a merry scene presented itself.

The village consisted of various picturesque cottages, of clay and timber, grotesquely ornamented on the outside with fantastical gables, odd little balconies, and flights of stairs outside, leading from the upper stories to the ground.

The gardens before most of them were enclosed with rustic palings, and were gaudy with flowers, and several

giant trees of the growth of centuries hung over the little scene of peace and contentment. In the centre of the green the tall May-pole was towering with all its glittering and many-coloured ornaments; the pipe and tabor were sounding merrily, and the clowns and maids holding hands, were dancing round, much, it may be supposed, in the fashion of those of Ostade and Teniers though with dresses somewhat less ugly and grotesque. The more aged villagers, after the manner of sweet Auburn, sat under the shade of the trees, talking and laughing, while the horn of nut-brown ale passed soberly from hand to hand—be it observed, in passing, that till the reign of King James I., the habits of the English were exemplarily sober—their somewhat precise and most thrifty-looking wives sat near them, and little children laughed and frolicked around.

It was a very pretty scene.

At the top of the green, the Maurice dancers were now seen approaching.

Our forefathers, in their overflowing hilarity, were content with rather dull, and what we should esteem very stale jokes. We might any of us find pleasure in getting up very early, and gathering flowers on a pleasant May morning; but we should be rather puzzled to raise a laugh at the hobby-horse every year of our lives.

So it was not now.

Decked in all the gaudiest colours—green, yellow, and scarlet, with scarfs, ribbons, and laces, “hanged over” as one says, with gold rings, precious stones, and other jewels, feathers in their hats, purses hanging

their girdles, and numerous little bells to their garters, and round their arms ; so they came jingling and prancing along;—Maid Marian, a rosy lass of about seventeen, in a watchet coloured tunic and mantle of green, Friar Tuck, Robin Hood, Little John, and the never-to-be-forgotten hobby-horse, who, made of paste-board, and covered with a sweeping saddle-cloth of scarlet, and mounted by a gaily dressed clown, pranced and curvetted along, while the crowd shrieked and shouted with laughter.

The party from the Mansion House, stood together while the ridiculous group played their antics before them. Everard, who was a little too advanced to enjoy such foolery, had, however, left the place, and wandering about amused himself with reconnoitring the village.

His was a heart to sympathise with happiness in every form, and he walked from group to group as they sat there engaged in social talk; the various and gaudy colours of their dresses, contrasting so pleasantly with the verdure of the grass, and the soft growth of the overhanging branches.

His eye followed the antics of the children gambling round the trunks of the trees, and the boys as they scampered wildly about and made somersets on the turf before him; responding to their merry laughter with his kind tranquil smile.

It was indeed a beautiful evening—an evening to spread a sober tranquillity through every breast.

The sun, now slowly sinking in the west, poured floods of radiance upon the scene, tinting the tops of

the trees with a golden light, and flinging their long shadows upon the grass.

The mingled hum of voices, the sounds of innocent merriment filled the air, while the bells of the little church gave from time to time a gladsome peal, as the bell-ringers of the village exercised themselves in the mysteries of their art.

Every human heart will respond by the recollection of some scene of a similar description, to the sober and tender feeling of happiness which pervaded the young man's spirits.

The day had been one of unmixed felicity to him, from the first delicious hour of the morning, when he gathered for her the hawthorn branches, clustered with flowers and heavy with dew—till this last half hour, when she had walked down to the village by his side, prattling with that pleasant cheerfulness, that gaiety yet solid good sense, which was to him so delightful and so precious. And as he wandered along, his thoughts were busy with these recollections—but the day was to conclude less pleasantly than it had began.

At the upper end of the village green, somewhat apart from the crowd, and a little sheltered from the general eye by the heavy sweeping branches of a huge lime tree, two gentlemen were standing.

CHAPTER XII.

" Oh what a crocodilian world is this,
Compos'd of treach'ries and insnaring wiles."

Quarles.

THE two gentlemen were dressed entirely in black, with short cloaks, plain bands, and hats without either feather or buckle; they seemed to be watching what was going on with somewhat sour and sarcastic looks, and every now and then they cast very inquiring and inquisitive eyes at the party from the Mansion house at Goddeshurst.

Everard was sauntering along, gazing idly about him; or most often not gazing at all, but musing rather than observing; his mind filled with such idle fancies as occupy a young man's thoughts, who is very much in love: when he was startled by the sound of a voice not altogether unknown to him.

" A good day to you, young sir," said the first gentleman, accosting him.

This gentleman, though dressed in the puritan garb, looked not at all like a puritan,—his features were singularly handsome, his complexion fair, his eye large and of a dark gray, almost blue, and his brown hair falling in soft curls upon his temples. His companion was of a very different aspect; his complexion was saturnine, his brow dark, his eye black and eager, his hair jet, and hanging over his yellow cheeks with the

true puritan precision of cut, and his thin, wiry, but large and powerful frame, was in strong contrast with that of the person he accompanied.

"A good day to you, young gentleman. You are come forth a Maying in pleasant company it seems if that pretty young lady who is standing by the venerable gentleman there be of your party."

Everard started—turned round—seemed astonished at the familiarity of the address: then he examined the speaker in a doubtful, suspicious manner.

"You have seen us before," said the elder gentleman of the two, he of the blue eye and auburn locks. "And though maybe the creed we profess may render us not so welcome visitors to you as we might peradventure prove to others, yet communication with those engaged in *his* service ought never to be distasteful to those who are seeking it."

Everard, who had by this time recognised the speaker, bent his head in a sort of reverential salute, but made no answer.

"This godless, heathen diversion of the May-pole," continued the first gentleman, "seemeth to be much encouraged by the lord of the manor here. And pray, is it be not a question indiscreet to ask, who may that venerable gentleman in sables be, who seems so intent upon the marvellously ridiculous friskings of that fools' toy, the hobbyhorse?"

"His name is Mr. Warner, sir," said Everard, in the respectful tone of one who acknowledges a superior, "he is the priest at Goddeshurst." The gentlemen frowned.

“ Young gentleman,” said the second, “ methinks you are marvellously free in your communications, considering whose livery we wear; the promulgating that a man is a priest, is a service no gentleman will in these times proffer you many thanks for rendering him; but,” looking at the other, “ your secret shall be safe with us.”

“ Our garb,” said the first, “ bespeaks our opinions with regard to matters, on which men are perilling life and estate; and Master Everard should learn, before he speaks, to observe who it is that he addresses; he may endanger his friends, even to the knife, if he be not a little more circumspect in his communications. He should regard the *character* represented by those he addresses before he gives his tongue such liberty.”

“ I cry pardon,” said Everard, looking perplexed, “ I thought I was addressing friends.”

“ And what should make you think so, young sir?” said the first gentleman, with some severity. “ Men in our garb are not wont to be friends with men who carry secret dispositions such as yours.”

The young man coloured.

“ When was the Puritan a friend to the reconciled Catholic?” added he, with a slight sneer.

“ But,” waving his hand, “ a truce to this subject; let me only repeat my warning to you, young man, for 'twere sin and pity to see so goodly and so *godly* a youth fling himself into the den of lions through very want of heed. Recollect the *character* of those you are addressing, and you will speak more on the guard.”

“ That gentleman is, I think you said,” he continued, for Everard made no reply, “ a friend of the family.”

[illegible]

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the situation.

2. Once the problem is identified, the next step is to define the objectives and goals of the project. This helps to clarify what is to be achieved and provides a clear direction for the work.

3. The third step is to develop a plan or strategy to address the problem. This involves identifying the resources needed, the tasks to be completed, and the timeline for the project.

4. The fourth step is to implement the plan. This involves putting the strategy into action and monitoring progress to ensure that the project is on track.

5. The final step is to evaluate the results of the project. This involves assessing the outcomes against the objectives and goals, and identifying any lessons learned for future projects.

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~~SECRET~~ ~~TRANSMIT IN PLAIN~~

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DO hereby certify that
[Name] is a citizen of the United States of America
and is entitled to the rights and privileges of citizenship
under the Constitution and laws of the United States of America
in accordance with the provisions of the Naturalization Act of 1906
and the laws of the United States of America.

[illegible]

"I'm not even here" said the man.

or Sir Oliver, or whatever may be thy name—for I guess thou'rt of the cloth—that's Mr. Mulsho's only daughter; that's the heiress of Goddeshurst, and she's a pure one. I think her lips be like cherries, and her cheeks like ripe currants and cream; and she's as dainty as a queen, and as good as a sister of charity. Aye, aye, she be a pure one, that she be."

"She's an idolatress like them all, no doubt," said the gentleman, "a black papist; let her lips be what colour they may, I'll pledge my glove to that."

"Why," said the old man, "if she be a papisher—which she hardly be—where's the harm of that? We were all papishers, weren't we, when I was a boy? I don't understand these cam jangles, not I; but she's as her father is. They comes to church once a month, and says their prayers like other folk; and if they have a mass said at home in a corner by that worthy old father Warner there, what harm is there in that, I wonder?"

"Oh, they come to church once a month, do they? and that's their idolatrous priest, is he?" said the second gentleman: "he looks marvellously unlike a priest in my opinion."

"Aye, he be one of Queen Mary's priests, one o' the old sort; they'll soon all be worn out now, I suppose, and then we shall all go to church together again, as we did afore these new fashions came in."

"Aye, aye," said the first gentleman, "but there are those who may say a nay to that."

"So they say, so they say," said the old man, eyeing them in a suspicious manner, "but *I* say," striking his

staff upon the ground, "I hope we'll have neither th P. nor that P. as the saying is; but the church as by a good old queen by law established; for they tell me, th be the true gold out of the wedge—the whole of it—and I'm for the pure gold; neither popish rubbish a puritan parings for me."

"The true gold out of the wedge—what is the gentleman talking about?" said the second puritan contemptuously.

"You never heer'd that fable, did you?" said the o man; "then I'll tell it ye. Why the true doctrine like, they say, unto pure gold what has be mixed up by them papish priests during a long l course of years I'm fain to suppose, with a hu mess of dirt and rubbish which hath all got mingl with it—and the confessors of our church they s have purified this in the fire of their martyrdom and the pure gold hath left the wedge; and ha got it in a lump, and we've got *all* of it: but the puritans are so deadly afraid of a bit of popish d still sticking to the ore, that they are for throwi away a deal of good stuff with the rubbish."

The gentlemen smiled, and exchanged looks.

"This was to be expected," said one, "doctors divinity in hodden grey—a sign of the times. Bless fruit of a blessed tree. But, sage sir, to leave a controversy and return to things more within *our* province at least. That handsome-looking gentleman in t sad coloured satin suit, is, perchance, the father of t young lady?"

"Aye, sir, Mr. Mulsho."

"And *he*—is he a recusant—a papisher, as you call them?"

"I know not, sir; he goes 'to church every fourth Sunday; he has done so ever since this queen came in; and he is not one to alter his fashions to please these Jesuits and Seminarists which, bless your heart, they say swarm through the land like the black flies of Egypt, only a body can never see 'em. But none of that cattle come to Goddeshurst—Goddeshurst it was, and Goddeshurst it is—and the devil's imps are not going to be hidden in holes and corners there. Mr. Warner will serve their turn, and our good old Bess will never molest 'em."

"I am glad to hear you speak so heartily, good man," said the elder gentleman, "though no friend to our opinions, I see you are not in danger of relapsing into the foul errors of papistry. And so that Mr. Mulsho is really as rich as the world says he be."

"It's a fine estate, sir," said the old man, "and hath been well preserved by the master. He don't go but now and then to court, just to pay his duty, as one may say. But since my lady died, it's been quiet house-keeping—he gives us a hunting-match now and then;—but he don't go a hunting himself. It's rather quiet for the young gentlewoman, but she doth not seem to heed it. And as for the young gallant, if he be but as good, and as well to do in the world as he is handsome and brave in his attire, he may suit us, may be, as well as any other. But the hobby-horse has been kicking his heels this hour, and my grandson, Perkin, is a

riding on him; and so, please your worships, I'll ~~say~~
 good evening to you—and wish you as much contentment ~~as~~
 in your way of taking things, as there is in mine.

And the old man hobbled away.

Everard had during the conversation rejoined ~~the~~
 Mulsho's party.

"Are you acquainted with those two gentlemen?"
 said Mr. Mulsho. "By their garb I guess they are of
 a sort to take little pleasure in these diversions. I
 wonder what brings them here?" he added, rather
 anxiously, for they were days of suspicion, to all of his
 persuasion.

Everard did not seem to hear.

"My father wishes to know whether you are ac-
 quainted with those two grave-looking gentlemen," said
 Evelyn, "they seem to stand there like dark spirits
 scowling upon these poor merry people."

"I crave your pardon," said Everard, as if recol-
 lecting himself.

"I saw you speaking to them. Have you ever met
 with them before?" said Mr. Mulsho.

"No"—said Everard, colouring deeply: "not in
 that garb," he mentally added.

Evelyn looked at him anxiously. Why did he
 colour so deeply? the colour spread over his cheeks,
 temples, and even his neck, as disclosed by his falling
 collar.

He took out his handkerchief; seemed tormented with
 a sudden and violent cough; and turned hastily away.

Mr. Mulsho had not perceived his emotion, for his
 eye was fixed upon the two puritans.

He had no reason for any particular apprehension on their account: his course had been such as to secure him from the molestations and vexations which visited so many of his persuasion. But the events of late years had not only filled the land with numbers of dangerous characters, whose conduct had inspired the government with much well-grounded jealousy; but had likewise given birth to swarms of greedy and unprincipled informers, ever upon the watch to prey on the unwary; and every Catholic gentleman, however moderate his views or circumspect his conduct, felt as if his domestic quiet rested upon a most insecure tenure; and regarded the approach of any stranger with distrust and anxiety.

Mr. Mulsho, therefore, continued to watch the pretended puritans with uneasiness; while Evelyn looked with a sort of sad perplexity at her lover; who, now seeming to recover from his spasmodic cough, had again approached her side.

She did not allude to the subject of the strangers any more. She could not bear again to hear those lips utter what she felt convinced was not exactly true. Yet, why disguise so very simple a circumstance as whether he had ever seen those gentlemen before?

By-and-by the strangers making their way through the crowd, approached the side of the green where Evelyn was sitting upon a bench, her attendants upon the grass behind her, Fabian at her feet; her father and Mr. Warner standing on one side, and Everard, still disconcerted and uncomfortable, upon the other.

“Oh! those black cattle,” said Fabian—“if they be

coming here I must run away, Evelyn. I never could bear the black ox since I saw the fiend riding upon him at Bartholomew fair. I always think I see him cloven hoof—ain't that a queer sort of shoe?"

"Fie," said she, "they will hear you. Don't be so rude, Fabian: time was—as you said just now, and your privilege of saying just what comes uppermost is well nigh at an end."

"Aye," said he, looking at Everard slyly: "if I am to follow the fashions of this world—I must learn to lie with a circumstance."

"Poon—pshaw—nonsense," said she, again observing the deep crimson colour on Everard's cheek as he turned abruptly away. "What nonsense you are talking, sir?"

"Evelyn—when that young man tells you all manner of foolish dartering tales," said Fabian, "you see you're not to believe him."

She was distressed—she dared not speak again to Fabian, she was afraid of some fresh home truth being uttered. She turned away and began to talk to Mrs. Maude of going home.

Everard, embarrassed by the jester's plain speaking, had moved a few paces away; he came up to where the dancers round the May-pole, wearied with their gambols, were standing in a group. A boy hastily left the crowd, went up to him, pushed a scrap of paper into his hand, and saying, "You're to read that in your chamber," made a somerset on the grass, and disappeared among the crowd in a moment.

Everard put the billet in his girdle, and returning to the party, passed by the strangers; . . . they made him a low, distant salute, and then walked slowly away.

They had, however, cast a cloud over the enjoyments of the evening.

The commoner people followed them with that sort of dislike and hatred, which the puritans, especially the Brownists, excited among those not belonging to their sect; Mr. Mulsho was anxious, Evelyn deeply grieved and perplexed, Mr. Warner sad, and Everard miserable.

He felt that Evelyn had *not* believed him. He felt that the suspicion of untruth was hateful to her.

He was wretched at the idea of having fallen in her esteem, but it was impossible for him to explain; he could only endeavour to extenuate—extenuate, alas!—by using those casuistical sophistications of which he was never meant to be the dupe.

The sun had set, and the twilight was falling round them as they slowly ascended to the house. The path led through a coppice, and was narrow; Mr. Mulsho and Mr. Warner walked first, Evelyn and Everard followed silently behind.

Without intending it exactly—for she felt she had as yet no right to resent a deviation of this nature—there was a certain coldness in her manner as she answered some trifling question which he put to her.

“Evelyn is displeased with me,” at last, he said, sadly.

“I have no right to be displeased—I have no right even to feel sorry; but I cannot help feeling sorry.”

“Sorry! Is Evelyn sorry when her friend performs a painful duty?” said he in a low voice; “she should

rather rejoice when such victories over nature and inclination are achieved. They are painful ones enough she may rest assured without the pain being increased by her disapprobation."

"Victory?" said she, in a tone of surprise. "Over truth," she inwardly added.

"Yes, victory," he repeated, "and had I known how dear that victory were to cost me, I should—at least, I ought—to have been thankful that the occasion was afforded for so great a sacrifice to good faith."

"I cannot understand it," said she, as if to herself.

"Can you not conceive an occasion, when a man's duty requires the sacrifice of that which is almost as precious to him as life?" said he.

She felt confused; she could not quite unravel her ideas; he spoke with so much conviction that it was evident the deep colour of his cheek had not arisen from a dissatisfied conscience; and yet a falsehood!—for a falsehood she was more and more convinced it was—and she had believed truth to be the very strongest principle of his nature!

She appreciated the full extent of the effort he must have made to struggle against his natural sincerity; and yet such a victory, she could not help feeling, was, as indeed other victories have been said to be, worse than a defeat.

She was young, but her understanding was quite ripened enough for such reflections.

"Can there be a duty more sacred than truth?" at last she said.

"Are we to endanger others to gratify our own

natural love of truth?" was the question in reply. "Is not that the highest virtue which requires in its exercise the greatest sacrifice;—and what sacrifice can be greater than the immolation of one cherished principle for the sake of another?"

She could not answer such casuistry—it silenced her; nay, it in some measure convinced her. She was so glad to believe that Everard could not be wrong.

"I judged unjustly—I believe—I hope—I think."

"Ah, sweetest Evelyn! Only believe my truth to you, and what matters the rest to us? There are things in life most painful to be done. . . but let us think no more of them. Shall we think no more of them?" said he, sliding his hand to hers, taking it, and pressing it with much tenderness. "Will you forget this short and painful moment, and confide in a heart that will never play *you* false?"

Alas! poor simple Evelyn! Her tender heart never thought of asking—where were the grounds for confidence in the truth of one whom she had seen so obviously committing a breach of it but a few seconds before?

She was so glad to be persuaded that it was better to think no more of it.

And this was the first slight inroad upon the pure integrity of her own character. She had made one step. She had learned to forgive and forget the breach of a great principle.

He had been so absorbed by the interest of making his explanations—if explanations they could be called—and in the joy of reconciliation with Evelyn, that he had quite forgotten the little mysterious billet. He lifted it up and opened it.

A few words were written in pencil on a small morsel of paper, as if torn out of some tablets.

"At eleven o'clock—they will be all in bed by that time—come down. I shall be behind the church."

The young man gave an impatient shrug with his shoulders, bit his lips, tore the note into atoms, and saying to his page: "I shall read to-night, boy. You look sleepy—go to your bed—I shall want nothing more:" placed a chair by the window, and his lamp upon a small table near, and opening a drawer, took out a little thin octavo volume, and began, or seemed to begin, to read.

The book was one which had been put into his hands by Father Darcy, though apparently intended more particularly for the use of those affiliated to the order of the Jesuits; yet it was used as a book of instruction for all Catholics without distinction, and on the first page was written in the father's neat and elegant hand an extract from that particular bull of the pope, which had so recommended the book:

"Omnia et singula in eis contenta ex certa scientia nostra approbamus. . . . hortantes plurimum omnes et singulos, utriusque sexus Christi fideles," etc.*

"Approve, commend, and confirm this doctrine, and earnestly exhort all Catholics, of both sexes, and in all

* Urbano Papa 8. In Bulla Canonizationis Ignatii Anno 1623.

countries, that they would use these documents and be instructed by them."

He began once more to read over and meditate upon those pages which he had been taught to believe inculcated these just rules of the Christian life, and which were henceforward to serve as the guide of an existence which he so sincerely, so earnestly, so devoutly desired to render the pattern of all that was honourable and excellent.

Again, with a painful revolt of nature, he considered one or two of them more particularly applicable to his own case, and again endeavoured to submit his mind to maxims promulgated by an authority to him without appeal.*

Regula prima:

"Sublato o Mani iudicio," etc.

"They are to remove and reject all their proper judgments, and always have a prepared and ready mind to obey the church."

Secundo:

"Sic habet—Deteque ut ipsi," etc.

"And that we may be altogether unanimous and conformable with the Catholic church, if she define any thing to be black which our eye sees white, we are in like manner bound to acknowledge that it is black. Si quid quod oculis nostri apparet esse album, nigrum esse illa definierit; Debemus itidem, quod sit nigrum pronuntiare."

Regula tertiusdecimus:

"Ut obedientia sit perfecta quicquid nobis injunctum fuerit, obeundo omnia justa esse nobis persuadendo," etc.

* *Exercitia spiritualia Ignatii Loyolae Antwerp. 1638. pag. 238, &c. &c.*

“ They must reject all their own reason, and acquiesce in the judgment of their superiors, who must be submitted to and obeyed; and persuade themselves that all things are just and lawful which are commanded by their superiors.”

On the wide margin of this page, in the same hand, was appended:

“ Omnia ac singula in eis contenta pietate et sanctitate plena et ad edificationem et spiritualem perfectum fidelium valde utilia.”—Dictae Ballae, p. 5.

Or in the English of that day: “ These rules are full of piety and sanctity, and for edification and spiritual proficiency very profitable.”

The young man sat leaning with his head upon his hand reading these sentences with a feverish, restless excitement. In vain the soft night wind blew upon his cheek: in vain for him the still, holy calm of nature that surrounded him: his mind was in a state of the most irritating doubt and agitation.

He was vexed more than he dared to confess to himself at the manner and proceedings adopted towards him; and his spirit revolted against the assumption of arbitrary authority implied by the tone of the note and the writer of it, at the casual encounter of the village.

The questionable nature of the interview, too, which was demanded in a manner so brief and peremptory! and the disagreeable, painful task imposed upon him!—that of stealing out of his friend's house in the dead of the night, like a thief or a felon, in order to meet one, whom only to be known to hold communion with, was in these times so dangerous!—

again to have recourse to those
his cheek with the deep colour of

He would not do it. These
were carried too far: this sp
be resisted. It was true, by n
had been reconciled to the reli
was that argument sufficient for
submission? Mr. Mulsho was a
yet he was no slave. He would
would not go.

He rose from his seat, took two
down the room,—then returned to
the book and read again.*

“Valde necessarium est, &c.”

“They must look upon their s
the place of Christ.”

“Christi Vicarios et Christivici
• partes agentes.”

“In the place of Christ !”

And he looked —

"And yet—these rules," turning the leaves of the book in his hand. "What have I to do with them—I am not professed of the order of the holy St. Ignatius—these rules are addressed to those who are, why impose them upon me?"

Then the notes introduced by Mr. Darcy struck his eye: the recommendation of those rules to the whole body of the Catholics: and again he felt doubtful and irresolute.

He sat, the book in his hand, and his eye wandering vacantly over the lawn before the house. There stood the little church, shaded by the few ancient trees which hung over it, faintly to be discerned in the dim twilight of the half-extinguished stars.

The clock struck the half hour past eleven; and as it sounded, he saw a dark figure emerge for a moment from behind the church, look round, as he thought, and then retire again.

"He is there, he is waiting for me. It is impossible to let him remain thus any longer: I must go down to him."

He again clasped his girdle, replaced his poignard in its usual position, fastened his cloak, and taking the lamp in his hand, prepared to go down.

He opened the door with great precaution, the hinges shrieked and cried as he did so; he stopped, listened, all was still but the beatings of his own heart.

"What is this? This is a new feeling for me," he mentally ejaculated. "Am I become a coward?—Am I startling if a mouse creeps?"

He looked upon the sea and was gloriously quiet, even
the most restless waves and moaning shoals.

He looked along the glittering sea and contemplated the wide
dark sky. There was a small boat moving into the
distance behind it and a single star : this he watched,
and thought and and the night.

It was but a few moments—and his mind and soul by every
thing around him. The sea was rising upon the
shore and the sky. The dark and moaning waves were
moving their dark shadows upon the shore. The moon
and the stars never to be seen away and two bright
planets were glittering over the dark horizon while the
dark clouds were alive with the immense host of
stars.

On such a night the ancient mariners kept watch in
jagged hollows and deep troughs—and in such a
night the sea is dead and the sky.

STILLNESS THE IMMENSE MYSTERY.

On such a night while all in this world slumbered in
peace—under the protection of that benign and mes-
senger power which rules these glittering orbs in their
several spheres—another dead and minister of the father
of deceptions, impressions and lies was lying in wait
to deceive the more young, generous, and innocent
heart to the verge of deepest destruction.

The sweet influences of the hour calmed the agita-
tion of the young man. He gazed upwards, he gazed
around, his soul was in harmony with that vast infinitude
of creation which in such a night seems more parti-
cularly revealed to us. His heart swelled to that power,

to great, so infinite; and glowed with the fervent devotion of truth and nature.

The feelings of irritation and anger died within him. The love of all mankind was in his heart; the love and obedience for Him, that divine one who died for all mankind, was swelling in his bosom;—and this simple childlike obedience he felt so ready to pay, was about to be transferred, alas!—to a false, ambitious, and intriguing priest, whom he had been taught to regard as the vice-gerent of the blessed one. He approached the little church, and passing round it placed it between himself and the windows of the house.

On the wide path before it, wrapped in his dark cloak, he whom he came to meet was slowly pacing up and down.

He turned round, and seeing Everard, stood still, and waited till he should approach him.

Everard came up.

“I am afraid I have kept your reverence waiting,” said he, with politeness: “but if I may crave leave to say so much—the command was sudden and unexpected, and obedience to it neither very agreeable, nor perhaps very expedient.”

“I pretend not to command”—said the gentleman, in a calm, but somewhat cold tone of voice. “My province is to influence, rather than to dictate—I have nothing to do with command. If obedience to my desire be irksome to you, sir, you have only to return, and leave me where I am.”

This speech at once changed the course of the young

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W. W. L. — and his complexion seemed to grow
more red as he pronounced the word — "He is per-
haps — striking words in Everett's face —" one with
the comprehension of the seriousness of our condition,
and his sympathy with the dangers of our enterprise
— W. W. L. danger and death, in order to carry the

light of salvation to the perishing flock, must appear a strange, enthusiastic proceeding to a man of sentiments so *reasonable*—as I understand those of Mr. Mulsho's to be. But I am not ashamed to assert, that in my opinion, such rigid reason is only a softer name for infidelity and atheism."

"Infidelity! atheism!" cried Everard. "Pardon me—far, indeed, from that—Mr. Mulsho is a most devout and pious man."

"Something after the new fashion in these things," said the other, with a slightly sarcastic smile—"one, I understand, who reads his Bible; attends the services of the church, as by law established; and hears a mass now and then in the corner of his drawing-room."

"He is a very sincere Catholic," said Everard.

"If by Catholic be meant universal,"—in the same slightly sarcastic tone—"no doubt Catholic enough: this way is a very broad and a very easy one to travel—and some of us have heard where the broad way leads."

"I thought that parable had reference to the moral life," said Everard.

"I pray you take me with you, young gentleman," said the priest, in that sort of tone of indulgence with which we meet the futile reasoning of an ignorant child. "Moral life! The term is a happy one. Not altogether new to me, though I am of the old leaning; and leave matters of this high nature to the decision of that church of which I am an unworthy member,"—crossing himself; "but the age advances. I was so happy this evening as to be favoured with a short lesson

wanted. But I have been troubled this evening. . . . The demands made upon my fidelity have been great. In conformity to the directions I had received—in conformity to the obedience I had vowed—for the first time since I was born, I have told a deliberate *lie*,” and the hot colour again flushed over his face. “I would be glad to be assured how to reconcile her voice, with that loud clamouring voice within me, which declares I did a mean, cowardly, and criminal thing.”

“A lie!” said the Jesuit, looking exceedingly shocked, “a lie! Who instructed you, young man, to lie? Not your holy church, rest assured. Impious blasphemy—the church demand a lie!”

“I was enjoined to keep my knowledge of yourself and Mr. Tesmond, a secret at any cost, and at any hazard. I took the holy sacrament upon the promise to deny my knowledge of you whenever I had reason to believe that such was your desire. I took that oath as many of those I loved did with me. I little thought how soon I should be called upon to redeem my promise by uttering a dastardly *lie*.”

“Redeem your promise by uttering a dastardly lie!” repeated the priest with considerable indignation in his manner; “are you aware of the import of what you are saying, young gentleman? The necessity of a lie was imposed upon you! Recollect yourself. What can you mean?”

“I was asked in direct terms whether I had ever seen you before; there was no possibility of evasion.”

“Well?”

“And I lied.”

“Then you committed a deadly sin, sir; and with as it would appear, so criminal an indifference to the sin you were committing, that it shocks and confounds me.”

“Heaven is my witness not with indifference I cried Everard, earnestly.

“And what name does it deserve but that of the most criminal indifference to evil—to commit a crime of this nature when means so obvious and so easy exist by which it may be avoided. Learn, at least, better to comprehend the principles of that church into whose sanctuary you have been admitted. She is the tenderest of nursing mothers to her spiritual children, and provides with every imposed duty the means to facilitate its execution. Upon the secrecy of our friends not only our lives, but the very existence of the sacred cause committed to us, depends. Such secrecy under the most sacred obligations has been exacted. Provision has also been made for the security of the conscience in preserving it.—But these are the fruits of reasoning and self-teachings.—You presume, sir, to forsake the sure guides appointed for your direction in these things, and think proper to judge for yourself. Had you not done so, you might, perhaps, have recollected that the remedy held out for such cases, is mental reservation.”

“I made a mental reservation,” said Everard.

“Then what do you intend by saying you lied. These are strange contradictory assertions,” said the Jesuit.

“I felt the colour of shame fly over my face.—I seemed to me and then there was another and

he hesitated; "there was one standing by.... a second conscience.... a.... which told me I had done basely."

"Did she?—Did this second conscience know of the reservation?"

"No," said Everard; "but had she, I felt that she would have disdained the subterfuge."

The gentleman he was addressing paused at this speech, gazed at him; measured him slowly, as it were, from head to foot; sighed with a certain emphasis, if one may say so; and then turning, walked once or twice up and down the little terrace on which they had been standing. He was, in fact, gaining a few moments for consideration.

This was a case of difficulty. Here was one whose adherence to the party he esteemed of the greatest consequence—who appeared on the very verge, as it should seem, of escaping from his influence.

A master in detecting the various workings of the human passions, the Jesuit discerned at once the nature of this second conscience which exercised so much authority.

To learn the exact position of his disciple with respect to the heiress of Goddeshurst, had been one of his principal reasons for demanding the interview; for much as he disliked the principles held by Mr. Mulsho, and the party in the church to which he belonged—so great an accession of wealth as the marriage would bring to one whom he still flattered himself to keep in his power, was not to be despised.

But to learn something of the young lady's disposition—something of the nature of Everard's feelings under this intimate connexion, with what might be esteemed a hostile house—was important; for in an event, the power he possessed over the young gentleman's mind must not be put in hazard.

After these few minutes spent in consideration, he returned to where Everard was standing, and taking his hand in an affectionate manner, said:

“ Whatever the influences to which you allude, Sir Everard, suffer a friend—a more than friend, a father—one whose heart yearns with more than a father's love towards you—to warn you against a weak subjection to feelings—alas! too powerful over the heart of youth. Recollect how many of the strong, the virtuous, the pious, and the wise, have, through the excess of such influences, been shipwrecked and undone. Hold fast, I exhort you, by the doctrines you have received: anchor your faith on them. The church hath decided these vexed questions by her doctors and her ministers. In her decisions rest—let not the cavilling spirit of these times induce you to despise her provisions; if concealment be necessary for the security of her holy confessors in this dark and blood-besprinkled land—she has provided for them by her system, a veil of impenetrable concealment, and a shield of sure defence. Let not the deceitful smile of beauty, Everard, persuade you to cast the veil and shield aside, and by your weakness to endanger not your own safety, for that I know you would scorn to regard—but

the safety of those, the martyrs to the faith, who are ready to seal their labours and their testimonies with their blood."

Oh! how this sophistry confused this young man's heart and conscience;—this appeal to his feelings in favour of those, whose very existence might depend upon his secrecy; and whose generous devotion, as he thought it, in a great and good cause, made his heart glow with admiration.

The distrust of his own judgment, his secret consciousness of the influence that fair girl exercised over his mind, and the loud cries of a still unperverted conscience, which could not away with deceit, distracted him with doubt and perplexity.—He looked wretched as he felt.

Like him who played upon the passions of the young and ardent conqueror and king by the music of his lyre; so played this deep and dangerous man with the feelings of those he purposed to subdue.

He discerned, as if written upon a tablet, all that was combating in Everard's heart; and he saw that it must be by a long and persevering patience that he could hope to bend it entirely to his hand.

He contented himself for the present with saying, in a voice of much kindness:

"I see how it is with one so young and unprotected as you are, and so it must be for a season with all. But believe one, not altogether unlearned in such things—so long as nature, prejudice, fancy, passion, and what you mistake for reason, are clamouring and

contending within you, so long shall your soul be as ~~the~~ troubled sea, which cannot rest: but there is for ~~the~~ wandering mariner one blessed guiding star," and ~~he~~ pointed to the pole star now glittering amid ~~the~~ innumerable hosts of heaven, "be that thy cynosure, my son: so shall all these warring feelings subside into harmony, and peace shall rest upon your spirit." Everard, let that blessing be your portion now—~~but~~ content, you have done well—you did well in that you spoke the truth with a reservation, for in so doing ~~the~~ the truth you *did* speak...but time wears, let us end this discussion—I came here to discourse of matters more urgent than the sweet triflings of a young man's love."

"Have I said I loved?" said Everard, abruptly.

The priest smiled.

"Confessed in every tone and gesture—but let that pass; though of this among other matters, I had purposed to speak to thee."

"Say on," said the other.

"May I venture so far"—again approaching him, and speaking in his softest manner.

"What you mean is for my good, I know."

"This woman—this beautiful child of the world—may she not prove to thee like those fair daughters of the olden days, who beguiled the very angels of heaven to ruin."

"She is a Catholic like myself," was the reply.

"The Holy Virgin forbid that it should be like yourself—forbid that ever you should be as the daughter of

William Mulsho—a conforming Catholic. To wed a declared heretic might prove less dangerous.”

“Of these things I must be allowed to judge,” said the young man somewhat impatiently.

“And yet it is the part of friendship to warn and advise.”

“There are limits to the privileges of friendship—No faith will be perilled by Evelyn’s side.”

“Enough,” said the priest, for he found he had already touched that limit, “there is more urgent matter in hand. The long delayed trial of the unfortunate victims, our brethren in the faith, comes on to-morrow—and they must die.”

“They told me,” said Everard, with emotion, “that the sentence would be commuted: that they should merely be carried out of the kingdom. This is strange, unnecessary cruelty.”

“Unnecessary, you call it—oh! sir,” with a bitter irony in his tone, “have you yet to learn what hard necessities lie upon the tender hearts of the queen’s privy council—and what severe duties are imposed upon the gentle queen herself, whose merciful intentions with regard to her lieges we well know.”

“There must have been some deeper offence given than I heard of,” said Everard.

“Treason,” said the other, “a small matter of treason cooked up for the occasion to entrap the poor Catholic. Oh, sir! have you yet to learn that the council have ever sufficient of treasons ready prepared to hang about the neck of any wretched Catholic priest who may fall into their hands . . . but no more of this, my purpose

in coming here to-night was to learn how you stand at present affected; and how the gentleman under whose roof you abide, stands affected to the present government—in short, whether, when we are counting upon our supporters in a struggle, which may ere long take place, we must remember or forget you.”

“I love the old queen with all her faults,” said Everard; “she has ever been partial and kind to me. Number me not among those who have aught against her?”

“And Mr. Mulsho?”

“There is not a man more devoted to her service.”

“I am answered,” said the priest. “One word more and I have done. Our fraternity is closely watched and to own a truth, we have all had that part in the late business whatever it might be, which would render it easy for the government to take away our lives were we but once in its power. I am as yet unassured what your *conscience* will call upon you to do in such a case—whether to betray to a barbarous death those who have implicitly trusted you, or to shelter us by the means which every faithful Catholic but yourself employs without scruple. You were trusted, sir, in ignorance of your newly acquired principles. My life is at the moment in your hands, but I confide it to your honour with this observation, that to impart the secret to Mr. Mulsho were to entail upon us certain destruction. Doubtless, he would esteem it his duty to betray us to this blood-thirsty woman But you must act as your conscience directs you—we are at its mercy, sir.”

And with a salute rather more ceremonious than

usual, he turned away, and descending the hill, was soon lost in the closing thickets.

He did not wait to receive the assurances which he was certain Everard was hastening to make. He had perfectly well calculated the effect of this last speech upon his temper.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ This is not altogether fool, my Lord.”

Shakspeare.

FATHER DARCY slowly proceeded down the wood till he came to a little open spot among the trees, near which ran a wimpling brook, now glittering in the starlight.

A large oak cast its wide-spreading branches over the turf which covered this little glade, and under it was placed a rustic bench. On this Mr. Tesmond, his companion upon the village green, was sitting expecting his return.

The inferior Jesuit rose with an air of deference as Mr. Darcy approached ; and though evidently impatient to learn the result of the meeting with Everard seemed not to presume upon asking any direct question. He resumed his seat by the side of his superior, and the silence was unbroken for about a quarter of an hour.

Then Mr. Darcy spoke.

“ Nothing could be less satisfactory than what has just passed,” said he. “ Two points I have, however ascertained. He loves this young lady. He has no reason to despair. The influence she exerts is great—and *our* influence proportionally upon the decline.”

“ I should have thought,” said Tesmond, “ that his

was a nature so candid and simple, as to be easily governed—and that he would be the last to dispute principles which he must consider as resting upon such unquestionable authority.”

“I don’t know—I think I have usually found in my dealings with souls, that these simple, candid, ingenuous sort of characters, are less easily brought to submit to the influence it is our duty to exercise, than those of more rash, haughty, and violent dispositions. Robert for instance—I am mistaken if he make not a more devoted servant to the best interests of the Church than this gentle Everard.”

“Is it the intention of your reverence to allow of the great accession of power and influence which would accrue to a man of principles so equivocal, from a union with their heiress?—Why not Robert instead?”

“Because Mr. Mulsho would sooner bestow his daughter upon her grave I believe, for one reason—and for another, that Robert is devoted to the Lady Grace.”

“But there are other designs for the Lady Grace.”

“True.”

“And therefore—”

“And therefore Robert is ours. Trust me, Mr. Tesmond, nothing will reduce Robert so speedily as unhappiness of this nature. Let be—let be—things cannot be in better train than they are in that quarter.”

“And Eleanor?”

“Let that pretty child alone too, Mr. Tesmond. Your temper, with pardon, inclines you somewhat too much to interference with the course of things. Let

be—let be—it is a long and a strong chain that is linked together by the human passions. Let the fair Elean~~or~~ enjoy for a brief space the delusions of her sweet dream~~s~~, if dream it be. Nay, who knows? we may have need of her to cement the friendship between Robert and h~~er~~ brother : and the poor flutterer may after all be happy in her own way.”

So they two discoursed, sitting under the shade of that spreading oak-tree, the stars of heaven in thei~~r~~ mild and calm splendour glittering like thousands of eyes upon them—and so they dealt with the destinies of the human creatures confided to their care, as the chess-player deals with his ivory pieces; and regulated thei~~r~~ proceedings with as little real sympathy for their joy~~s~~ or sufferings, as the man intent on victory feels for the interests of his bits of carved bone.

Devoted to the aggrandisement of the most ambitious order in an ambitious church—hardened by that daily handling of holy things, without holy feelings, which is the most perilous, perhaps, of all the temptations to which man can be exposed—blinded by the pretence of advancement for their religion, which hid their evil purposes, in some degree, even from their own hearts—separated by their religious vows from that domestic communion with mankind, which awakens some gentle sympathies even in the most insensible—they played with the consciences, the morals, the feelings, the happiness of the living beings confided to them, with an indifference the most unprincipled and detestable.

“Here we part,” said the superior to Mr. Tesmond—
“my mission leads me south—to watch the progress of

this terrific trial. It is a service of danger, but my disguises are secure. There is also one at this moment awaiting me in London with whom I have to confer upon matters of the deepest import. This heretical woman seems invulnerable to the influences of poison—in vain the assassin's knife is directed against her. . . . It is determined that no further attempts of this nature shall be made—but as the great Achilles perished through the one unguarded point, so there is that in her which we may yet be able to pierce—her woman's heart: the next blow shall be directed there. We shall not again, perchance, strike in vain. . . . Your way, Mr. Tesmond, leads you to the circuit among our friends—Coughton Ashby—Herlip—Stoneleigh—it is some time since they have been comforted by a visit from any of us. Let me recommend the closest disguises: for as many eyes are abroad and on the watch, as are now beaming upon our heads from the spangled heavens. Ha! what was that? A hare or squirrel in the bushes?"

"No,"—said his companion, looking round suspiciously—"I distinctly heard a rush through the thicket behind us—as of one moving rapidly away.—We have been overheard. . . ."

"Not even in the wilderness is there security for us," said the superior,—“who can have been on the watch at this still hour of night?—Come, come, I think it was an alarm without foundation—but whether or not, we are best separated. Farewell, sir, and safe be your pilgrimage. If our next communication with each other should be as prisoners, like that unfortunate man—our

Here we part, sir. —seeing
“ have I not expressed my desire

“ Adieu! and the saints in
verence,” said this large, dark
bowing with the utmost submi
almost effeminate-looking superior

And so they parted.

The morning rose as sweet, as
if no dark intriguers stealing to n
night had been preparing their c
discord, suspicion, and bloodshe
men, sons of the same country, as
body politic.

And Fabian, the fool as he w
the first who sallied forth from t
hurst to enjoy the pleasant hour.

The youth whose strange de
become a jester, was any thing
simpleton which such a profession

and he would gladly have exchanged his idle wandering calling for one of wholesome industry, had that seemed possible; but he was attached to the family in his present capacity, and his rearing had rendered him quite unfit for any other. He consoled a heart and head intended for better things, by cherishing the most devoted attachment to Mr. Mulsho and his daughter; and, taking advantage of the universal licence in which such as he were indulged, occupied his time in watching the progress of any thing about which he could hope to be of the least use or benefit to either of them.

More especially he had constituted it his particular province, to observe all that had reference to the important event of the fair Mistress Evelyn's marriage. It seems that his sage judgment was pretty well satisfied with respect to her present suitor; though he shared to its full extent with her father and the old priest in their distrust of men linked to the intrigues of the day.

The fool was in general very well aware of every thing that was going on, and understood the bearings of matters better than many esteemed much wiser than himself. He had attended Mr. Mulsho and his daughter upon their visits at several of the Catholic gentlemen's homes, and he had peeped behind scenes where their eyes were never allowed to penetrate.

He had watched the puritans speaking to Everard at the village festival; and whatever Everard might pretend to do, he for one felt certain that he had seen the fair-haired gentleman before.

An "O Lord!" with a strange grimace, behind Mr.

Mulsho's back, and a sort of pirouette which continued some time, had been his way of expressing his little faith he attached to Everard's declaration that knew them not.

Fabian walked out this morning meditating with half wise, half vacant face upon these things, and wandered along without well knowing where he went till he had passed by the little church, and entered the wood beyond. He took, without any particular intention, a narrow, unfrequented path, begirt with deep fern and bilberry bushes, and overhung by the thick branches of the trees; it opened suddenly upon a little glade formed by the wide-spread arms of the huge oak trees.

How sweetly sang the thrushes through the wood; how prettily fluttered the busy wild birds at their happy toils; he sat down upon the bench half occupied with his own thoughts, half engaged in watching these graceful creatures.

"It is a blessed world," thought he, "let them do what they will about it; and what a pity that great evil beast, man, was ever created to spoil this paradise. Alas yet if they would only let him alone, evil beast as he is, he'd not be so very bad neither. That Everard no doubt he's a good sort of youth, and a true; or would he have been, alack! I had better say, for my bauble to an old wife's distaff, but that was a hugeous lie he told last night."

"Did you speak?" said a voice, close behind him.

He turned—a tall, dark-eyed woman in a tattered garment stood there; she was yet young, her jet black eyes glittered with a wild energy, and her long black hair hung in elf locks round a face, whose beauti-

oval shape and finely-cut features bespoke her of the mysterious gipsy race.

"Jester, were you speaking to me?"

"Not exactly, mistress," said Fabian; "I was speaking, I believe, to a person far less worth speaking with; namely, my unfortunate and sadly jesting self, but whence are you?"

"I slept by the wild fox's lair, last night," said she, "and I heard the owls screech and hoot to the weary wandering moon. There," pointing to a dry sandy bank, where there did appear to be a fox's earth, or a lair of some wild animal, overhung with straggling brushwood, "I came to sleep *there*, for I had had a battle with Hugo, and he beat me.—The wild beasts of the forest are less savage than man, so I came to rest there."

"Why, mistress, I think I saw you on the green yesterday spelling fortunes among the silly village maidens, and I saw that fierce gipsy youth waiting for you, as I thought, behind the holly bush. Did you quarrel about the testers with which they crossed your hand?"

"The testers?"—contemptuously,— "no, no, he was not waiting or caring for me."

"Jealous!" said Fabian; "does that civilised vice infect you denizens of the woods? I thought you were free of that at least."

Her eyes sparkled. "Those who have but one treasure upon earth know how to prize it. No, no . . . you may call the feeling what you will, but this I know, if Hugo gave me cause, his life or mine, it would matter little—but let *our* quarrels alone, they were never meant to furnish matter for the mirth of fools. Look nearer

home, there's love more worth your thinking about going on between the dainty mistress of the mansion and that Everard."

"*That* Everard—and wherefore *that* Everard? me-thinks this is a mighty indecorous way of speaking of him."

"He's a handsome minion enough," replied the gipsy, "to those who like such Saxon features—the children of the sun for me. But there's one I love and reverence upon this earth, and that's your master there at the great house, and that youth is not dealing truly by him."

Fabian started . . .

"Those men he spoke with, you simpletons take—perhaps for that which they pretended to look like—godly puritans! and you did not guess that I knew them to be black Jesuits. Oh!" she went on rapidly and bitterly, "I know them, and I watch them well—the whole host of them—priests, monks, friars, black white, and gray, and this last spawn of the evil one the Jesuits. I was but a child—but it is burned in here. The father who nurtured me—and the mother who bore me—I saw them both in their *san benitos* there in the grand square at Madrid, the poor ignorant gipsies—burnt alive by the black hideous Inquisition. It fixed *here*. Oh, those priests! those priests! woe to those who have dealings with them, and that Everard *has* dealings with them. . . . Those two were last night here."

Fabian twisted and untwisted his legs, laid hold of his lips with his fingers, and sat in that expressive atti-

tude which belongs to perplexity, vexation, and attention combined.

"I lay under the greenwood bough last night, and I was kept awake as I told you by the hooting owls, and I saw a fair youth and a black priest talking under the shadow of that little church there; and after that, when he was gone away, as I lay crouching in the thicket, I heard those two evil ones settling their devil's devices by the light of the all holy stars. . . You go and tell old Mulsho of this; let him beware what he does with that sweet lamb his daughter. If sacrificed she must be, let it be on the holy altar of God and not at an offering to the evil one; did I not tell them their line of life was flooded with blood?"

And so saying, she turned abruptly away and was gone.

The jester watched her as she plunged through the thickets—then he took up his bauble, adjusted his cap, and sauntered idly towards the house.

They were sitting at breakfast in the withdrawing-room, as he came in.

The two young people side by side—Everard entirely occupied with his Evelyn—and she with a look more shy and conscious than before, was answering him almost in a whisper, while her eyes were fixed upon the table before her.

Mr. Mulsho and Mr. Warner were on the other side, and Mr. Mulsho had what was called a news-letter in his hand; a very rare and imperfect substitute for a newspaper.

He read it, sighed, and laid it down.

"More guilt—and more cruelty," was all he said, turning from his untasted breakfast. "Read it, Mr. Warner."

The old man took the news-letter, and as he read it, his countenance assumed a character of the deepest sorrow.

"Again!" he said; "oh! where will this end? where *can* it end but in the destruction of our religion?—or in the destruction of this kingdom so wisely governed—so prosperous and so happy.... Villanous and detestable practices—and bloody and fearful retribution!"

Everard lifted up his head, and begged to know of what they were speaking.

"Three more priests have been tried, found guilty, and are condemned to death for treasonable practices—and upon a fresh suspicion of attempted assassination."

"Impossible!—what injurious suspicions—what barbarity and injustice!"

"The suspicions are, I fear, but too well grounded. These practices have been but too common. This royal woman has but too often been exposed to the assassin's knife. It is a hateful subject...."

Everard was silent.

He knew these men well whom a few days would consign to the scaffold.

He believed them in this instance to be innocent of the designs attributed to them. Suspicion was but too well justified by the avowed principles of their party; but then he had only known these men as the advo-

cates of submission and promoters of peace. The one was a most accomplished scholar and polished gentleman; had devoted himself, as he believed, from principles of the purest and most disinterested nature to the English mission. He was beloved and respected, and justly beloved and respected, in Everard's opinion, by the whole Catholic body, by whom he was regarded with all the reverence due to a saint.

That there had been murderous designs going on, might be too true, but this gentleman must be ignorant of them. He must have fallen a victim into the snares laid for him by informers, and to the barbarous policy mentioned by Mr. Darcy.

The heart of Everard bled inwardly as he thought of these things.

There might be many at this time in England, who well deserved the sentence of high treason; but this man was assuredly not one of them.

It was a martyrdom and a sacrifice, and as such the whole Catholic body must regard it.

“Barbarous injustice!” he muttered again to himself.

“You know him, then?” faltered Evelyn.

But he was silent. At that moment he feared by a syllable to lead to the detection of some other connected with this business—he felt, what we should now call, a nervous fear of compromising any one of that body of religious professors, over whom this event threw, in his imagination, a sort of sacred halo.

He thought of the conversation of last night, and wondered at the indifference to his party which he had felt and displayed.

Communication with those who could so little share his feelings was irritating to him; he rose from his seat and wandered out into the garden.

Mr. Warner and Mr. Mulsho watched him, and then looked at each other.

Evelyn, saddened and weary, retired to her own room, where, incapable of employment, she sat down and her head sinking upon her breast, remained insensible to every thing but her own disquieting reflections.

"He is one of them. There can be no doubt of it," said Mr. Mulsho, after a pause, and with a sigh.

The old priest could only repeat the sigh.

"And truth, confidence, and plain dealing, are at an end," added his friend.

"Nuncle," interrupted the jester, looking in at the window.

"No foolery, good lad, to-day," said Mr. Mulsho impatiently.

"Mr. Mulsho," said the youth, putting his head and looking cautiously round the room, "there were other disguises abroad yester even besides Friar Tuck and Maid Marian."

"Have I not told you to forbear your foolery, you man?"

"Sir,"—and he sprang in through the window—"have a care what you are about. Two faces under one hood was never good heraldry. Have a care and ask that fine young gentleman what he was doing when the clock struck twelve last night."

"What do you mean?"

"He's no better than the rest of 'em—that's all—"

and can play hide and seek, and bo-peep for a wager—fore-warned fore-armed, it is said, and so the fool's done a fool's errand, and is gone."

And he was hastening to make his exit by the way he had entered, but Mr. Mulsho stopped him.

"Speak more plainly, Fabian," he said, with a voice of authority, "this foolery is neither pleasant nor timely, tell me at once what you mean—my anxieties are not to be trifled with."

"My dear and honoured master," said the boy, now laying aside all his affectation, "the Holy Virgin be my witness, that I would not trifle with you for the world—these are sharp times, and there are gins, snares, and pitfalls spread for us on every side; I thought you would have understood the poor jester at a word. That young man is imposing upon you, sir; those were not puritan divines with whom he exchanged courtesies on the green last night. He knew what they were well enough, and had seen them often and often before—but ask me nothing more: they may be laying hold of thee, mine honoured master, and who knows—and thou wouldst be loath to betray the poor fool to the question—ask nothing more of me—ask the young man.—May I go?"

CHAPTER XV.

“ Then as my gift, and thine own acquisition
Worthily purchased, take my child.”

Tempest.

“ YOU say you love my daughter—you speak a presumption in aspiring to her hand—a young man, such as I once esteemed you to be, Sir Everard, it has been the ambition of my life to call son-in-law.”

“ *Once thought!*”

Mr. Mulsho took no notice of the interruption, but proceeded:

“ In times so perplexed as these in which we live, a man tottering upon the brink of the grave, with one only object of interest left on earth—may hold himself excused, if with anxiety he looks to the character of those under whose protection his dearest treasure shall be placed.”

There was a pause here—and Everard for the first time observed that there was a slight difficulty and check on the breath in Mr. Mulsho's speaking.

“ Your life, sir, I hope will still be long and happy.”

“ Happy!” said Mr. Mulsho, “ it has not been to be so called since the mother of my Evelyn died.—My happiness will be in following her to that better world where, after the restless troubles of this, it is permitted to us to hope for peace....my life received a blow

when that tie was severed, what it has not and cannot recover; but the love for my Evelyn has forced me to live on—a truce, however, with so poor a subject as myself. There was a time when I thought my task was well-nigh ended: that in resigning her to your care, I had found for her a shelter from those storms which seem impending over our path, and which will rend domestic life . . . but I was flattering myself.”

“I cannot pretend—it would be rash and presumptuous in me, young as I am to vow . . . but if a love and tenderness the most sincere—if a desire the most ardent, a resolution the most sacred, to preserve her from every evil, and render her happy might avail . . .”

Mr. Mulsho looked at his young, simple, and most beautiful countenance, as he spoke with an earnestness of purpose which could not be mistaken: he gazed upon him a short time in his thoughtful manner, and then at last said:

“The desire of my life has been to unite my child with one, a stranger to those principles, and to those intrigues which have been lately to so fearful an extent carried on among those—professing what was once the *Englishman's* religion. Have I succeeded in this, Sir Everard?”

Everard coloured deeply, and cast down his eyes: he reflected a moment or two.

At last he seemed to have taken his resolution, and said:

“Where a full and candid avowal would be inconsistent with honour and good faith, the only course left for a man to pursue, is to acknowledge that such an

avowal cannot be made . . . These are questions on which I must beseech your indulgence if I re-
answer, but they are questions between myself and
own conscience, with which I trust the happiness
others hath nothing to do."

"Fatal exception! unnatural position! when
deepest convictions of man's heart are barred and
held from the partner of his life—when that which
most interesting, most sacred for human nature
rests upon which beings bound by the dearest and
sacred of ties are not allowed together to enter.
fatal disunions in states and in families! what
and what private happiness will be sacrificed to
new and pernicious doctrines! But I ask no further
Everard, one sentence is sufficient to explain your
position to me; like others of your age and character
invisible snare has entrapped you. Alas! could
spoiler not spare one!"

"The times are so difficult," said Everard, endeavouring to subdue the pain with which he listened
to this speech, the truth of which found but too ready
response in his own feelings, "that it is not easy
to discover where the true path of duty lies. The grievous
penalties imposed by the law upon certain acts of
devotion, which, I acknowledge that I reverence in the
very depths of my spirit, render secrecy the first
of every honourable and of every conscientious
action. I have been taught that such secrecy admits of
no exceptions, and that things which are to remain hidden
must be repeated to no one—on many passages in
my past life, my lips are closed, but of the future it may

allowed me to speak. Mr. Mulsho is mistaken if he believes it to be my intention to submit my life and conscience, as many others have done, to the guidance he deprecates. It is my purpose, and has been my practice, young as I am, to ask questions of myself, and as for the intrigues to which he alludes, it has been, and is, my firm determination to keep aloof from them. Common gratitude to the sovereign to whom I owe so much, would make me a very unfit person to enter into inquiries as to the validity of the title by which she holds her sceptre: and as for those darker practices of which men have been accused who are actually exposing themselves every hour to martyrdom for the sake of others, all I can say is, I know nothing of them, and moreover I do not believe in them."

The eye of Mr. Mulsho glistened as he again fixed it upon the speaking countenance of the young man: it was impossible for goodness, truth, and simplicity, to be written in fairer or more unquestionable characters on the human face.

"Such as I am—such as I have been"—he continued, with a spirit and dignity that was infinitely lovely, for it was the unaffected dignity of a heart secure in the rectitude of its own intentions: "Such as I am—such as I have been—it remains with you to say whether your sweet Evelyn can be intrusted to my care. But before I ask it, let me acknowledge what I think you ought to know—and which I may, without injustice to others confess. I was out great part of last night without the knowledge of any one. Things insignificant in themselves have in these times significance. It is

not my intention to render any account of the causes of absence—but I think you ought to be informed of it.”

“ I knew it before,” said Mr. Mulsho, “ and that was the cause of the explanation of this morning, which has led on your part, to the avowal of an affection which would do the daughter of any man honour

“ Upon one such as you are now”—endeavouring to conceal his anxiety ; “ upon one such as you still are, Sir Everard—I would consider myself blest to confer my child but how long—how long . . . ?”

“ Of the future it is vain for man to boast—into the future it is vain for man to inquire too curiously: it is your own sentiment, sir, which I repeat.”

“ True—true”—and he sank back and seemed lost in reflection.

Had it not been for the large estates which were to accompany the gift of Evelyn's hand, Everard would have pressed his suit in a far more importunate manner; and had not his own secret conscience acknowledged the justice of Mr. Mulsho's apprehensions, he might have been hurt and offended at these hesitations and uncertainties.

As it was he stood with his arms folded, and his head bent down—gravely expecting the final decision of the anxious father. But there was a strange contradiction in his feelings. Loving her as he did—all his prospects of happiness dependent upon her, and upon her alone—what was it that had made the heart of Everard beat with secret terror, and almost inclined him to wish that his suit might be after all rejected? What was it that hung like a cloud upon his mind, darkening the future

with indescribable melancholy? His purposes were what he had averred; he never had taken part, and he never intended to take a part, in those questionable intrigues which his reason and his conscience alike disapproved. What was there which hung as it were a dark curtain between him and that future which every circumstance in life seemed calculated to render peaceful and happy?

"I honour your forbearance," said Mr. Mulsho, lifting up his head at length: "your patience with the hesitations and anxieties of a father are of a piece with that temper which has appeared to me, ever since I knew you, as one of the most candid and indulgent that ever graced a human being. Whence the strange reluctance arises with which I accede to a proposal which seems to crown almost every wish I could form, I cannot tell. Shall I own it?—for we have all our weak and superstitious moments—I feel at this instant as if my better angel were crying out and urging me in a voice not to be resisted, to refuse your proffered hand. And yet," and he again cast his anxious inquiring eye upon that countenance, so full of tender thought and the loveliness of truth and candour: "And yet...." then rising and suddenly taking Everard's hand, "away with these unworthy doubts and evil anticipations; let me frankly avow, you are the only man upon earth on whom I could with pleasure bestow my child—take her—she is yours. I ask no pledges—I stipulate for no conditions—your conscience and your heart will comprehend the full extent of the confidence I repose in them. She is yours, Everard."

Even at that very moment of joy, a sadness, a the grave—an inexpressible foreboding of sorrow—like a dark cloud over the spirits of Everard.

Was it a presentiment of early death, such as it is sometimes possesses the soul, and is usually verified the result, or what was it? But whatever the cause of her happiness he vowed to secure—that precious day he at least could promise himself to hold sacred—for his own—why that must be as it must be. . . .

The contradictions within, the doubts and confusion, the distracting uncertainties that beset him, troubled that sanctuary of the inner being, wherein if there was not peace, little avails the prosperity without, bade this ill-fated young man to anticipate that happiness which every external circumstance seemed to promise him.

From that moment a tender melancholy seemed to possess him.

The demonstrations of his love for the sweet young girl bestowed upon him, had a softness, a sadness, a tenderness all so exquisitely blended, that never before had a lover seem to possess so magical a power over affections.

Evelyn began to love him with that devoted selflessness of passion which is the blest possession of a heart that has never loved but one; and which finds in love those depths of tenderness, which fill every depth of the soul.

This mystical and apparently foolish language will be understood by some.

She lived in him and for him. To have him by her side, silent as he now often was—for his heart was full of all the deep sadness of such a love;—to walk with him through the twilight shades of those yew-cut boscages, which they both seemed to choose in preference to the sunny walks of the garden; her hand in his, and pressed against his heart—not a look, not a syllable exchanged.... all this filled the heart of the young girl with a sense of exquisite felicity, of which the world in general can perhaps form little idea.

That voice of his—that dear, dear voice when he did speak. What music, what worlds of character in its tones!—It was like some sweet and mournful melody to her ear, which we catch at intervals, and which plunges the soul into a dreamy labyrinth of delicious melancholy, far more dear to the heart than all that mirth or laughter can bestow.

So passed the wooing time away—the marriage was fixed, and very soon to take place: but the story leads us now to sterner and darker matters.

CHAPTER XVI.

**"The master-piece of knowledge is to know
But what is good, from what is good in show."**

Quar

A CONSIDERABLE time had elapsed since that entertainment in the palace of Old Westminster, all these young people with whom I have endeavored to make you acquainted, had met together to enjoy

During that period, many events had happened which were influential upon their future fate.

The first and most important was the trial and condemnation of the priests.

All efforts to rescue them, or to avert the sentence for high treason were of no avail. Mr. Darcy, as some believed, had made unparalleled efforts in this cause, for his wide extended secret influence put men and engines into his power, of which even his friends were little aware; but whether his exertions as strenuous as he pretended, might be doubted by those who knew him well. The man who was able to suffer was his superior in rank, in learning and in city; and the influence he exercised, more extensive of a nature more flattering to self-love, than that possessed by Mr. Darcy himself.

How far he was engaged in the late conspiracy to assassinate the queen, for which he suffered, did

clearly appear; though doubtless deeply and ardently engaged in those intrigues for securing a Catholic, and if possible a Spanish successor to the throne, in which the whole party were so deeply engaged.

The very imperfect manner of obtaining evidence in matters of treason, and the very erroneous manner in which conclusions were drawn, which would appear monstrous in our present courts of justice, added to the habit of substituting what might be considered well-grounded suspicion on the part of the judge for a rigid sifting of testimony,—had led in this case, as it had so often done in others, to a sentence the grounds of which were any thing but conclusive.

It cannot be matter of surprise, therefore, that, with the disposition on the part of the Catholics to regard every one of their party who suffered for treasonable practices as martyrs to religion, these men excited more than ordinary pity and reverence, and that their condemnation to a horrible death excited the whole party in an extraordinary degree.

The barbarous punishments of those days cast a horror inexpressible over the sentences of the law, and aided, as such punishments ever must, in maintaining in the characters of men an indifference to, if not an absolute thirst for cruelty. These terrible examples were as a sort of dreadful education in barbarity; and that passion for revenge was kept alive, which furnished but too powerful materials to the priests in their operations upon the human mind.

The insensibility of the priests themselves to these

dreadful scenes of crime and retribution in which they involved so many, is sufficient to appal the mind.

The superior who was to suffer upon this occasion was, as has been said, most deeply revered and beloved,—and none had revered so deeply, honoured so truly, or loved so devotedly, as the Lady Grace. By him she had been reconciled and instructed; by him her late father had been maintained in that high spirit of enthusiasm under the influence of which he had cheerfully suffered so much; he was the friend, the adviser, the instructor of them all; and it was he who had cherished in her tender mind that disposition to severe ascetic devotion and to heroic self-sacrifice, which was soon to take so fatal a direction.

His condemnation to death had produced the most fearful effect upon her character—it can only be compared to that blast from the desert, which is said to wither and destroy all the sweet refreshing influence of life. That heart, with all its strong affections, lay as a heap of ashes. It was not grief, it was not sorrow, it was no feeling that deserved a name in which softness or consolation could mingle—it was a deep, harrowing sense of despair, embittered by those harsh demands for retribution and vengeance, which her mistaken religious views had cherished even in her.

A something strangely determined, a something almost desperate, might be read in the expression of her face; which spoke of excruciating grief, mingled with the bitterest indignation.

The awful resolution to which all this led—partly

the effect of that agonising desire to share his cross—partly of a passionate wish to attend his dread pilgrimage to the end—and partly of a resolution to honour the martyr's day of suffering by the self-devotion of his friends—would be read with astonished incredulity, did not the history of the past afford but too many examples of the like nature.

I shall not attempt to work up the narration into this history—I shall leave it as I found it, in all the rude negligence of the original narrator, for I myself am quite incapable of the theme.

Suffice it here to say, that from that day forward, Grace Vaux was never the same—she became like one blasted and stricken by the hand of God—a wanderer upon the earth, and a stranger to every tender or familiar sentiment that unites human society.

The Fragment.

“He is about to die a martyr for his holy church—and shall not I!....shall this cowardly flesh shrink and quiver—shall this poor spirit faint merely at witnessing his sufferings? No, no, Robert, with that holy woman I will go—I *will* go.”

“Yet hear me, Grace,” said he, looking at her with that expression which a devout and fervent heart casts up towards the blessed Queen of Heaven; “hear me, the heart of man dies within him, even at the bare imagination of such a scene. How can you, saint and

holy as you are—how can you hope to endure it ~~and~~ live?"

"I shall live," said she, with a beautiful and bitter smile; "I shall live, believe me—I am made of ~~stern~~ stuff—I shall live, till I see judgment executed upon this unholy and accursed race. Sooner or later, vengeance will overtake them. The cry of these martyrs will reach to Heaven, and I shall live to see it."

He looked at her again; she was hastily throwing a coarse sort of brown upper garment over her fair white dress; she had seized a pair of scissors, and was beginning to cut off her beautiful hair; he caught her hand, "Not so—not so."

"Yes, let it be so," said she, shaking him off. "Yes, let me mourn like the widows of Zion, over our prophet and our saint. Shall I wear again these vain fleeting ornaments—shall I take part again in this bad and wicked world? Oh, holy Anne!" turning to the aged lady who stood beside her, "were this but the altar, and this dress but the saintly veil, and this oblation the completion of the sacred vow!"....and as she spoke, she severed all her beautiful flowing tresses short off, close to her neck, and flung them disdainfully upon the floor.

He offered no more to interrupt her; he took up the hem of her long hanging coarse brown sleeve, and kissed it.

The aged nun stood looking mournfully on with her dim and sunken eye, and her withered hands were shaking and trembling with age and emotion, but she

answer when the Lady Grace spoke. A vision
 it was coming over her, and she thought of
 s when the convents had been there to afford
 bour for the miserable, who could find neither
 consolation elsewhere.

d come up to London, old and feeble as she
 the Lady Grace upon this Christian errand;
 ad belonged to an order of mercy whose part
 follow men to the fearful scaffold, and smooth
 passages to the grave.

were now occupying a very small, obscure
 a the neighbourhood of Paul's, for they wished
 coming to be bruited abroad; and here Robert,
 stal morning, had joined them, the two being
 in ordinary habits.

ad all three come up secretly on hearing that
 priest had been arraigned, and Robert, who
 al friends among the great men at that time
 had contrived to be present at the trial in the
 nber.

ige perversion of justice that trial appeared to
 1, and most of all to him, to be; and yet there
 tle doubt that that which the queen's majesty
 upon the occasion, was in the main true; and
 able man, and holy saint and martyr, as he
 dly was, suffered for his practices against this
 ; heretical queen, who, it must in Christian
 owned, suffered none to be pursued on account
 eligion alone, but only for their attempts (in a
 and righteous cause) against her person and
 Wherefore this holy priest is to be esteemed a

I wipe the death dew from thy noble brow, a blood drop from thy tortured breast."

And so in passive calmness, grave and sorrowful she walked on; but Robert's brow grew dark darker, and there was the look there of that dread angel of the Apocalypse who emptied the vials of wrath upon mankind—so stern, so black, so cloudy was his steadfast face; but neither did he proffer a word nor make sign or gesture, save that once he lifted up his eyes and met those of the priest;—and the meeting of those eyes said more than ten thousand words could do.

The Jesuit's look expressed, "My son, remember," and Robert's responded, "While one drop of blood remains in this heart, it shall be shed to avenge the blood of the innocent."

They had, perchance, both of them forgotten the text which I have read inscribed beneath the picture in Venetia Digby's Oratory, where the destroying angel waves the fiery sword, and it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

No: this holy priest was for urging forward the will of the Lord to take speedy and sharp vengeance for his judicial murder, as he esteemed it; and Robert's heart was made of that bold and manly stuff which would take wrong from no man, neither for himself nor others.

But aged Mother Anne was not of this way of thinking, but went slowly on, muttering her beads and praying for all the world—for him the martyr, for the conversion and salvation of her, the misg

yet noble queen—but the Lady Grace prayed not; her whole heart was full; indignation and grief were bitter there. She thought but of him, the martyr on that hurdle; and though she lifted not up again her eyes, she saw but him; his face was before her—his face led her on; there seemed to her neither saint in heaven, nor brother on earth, but one, and that was him. Even her church—that church for the restoration of which, with so many other devout and holy ones, she was ready to sacrifice all on earth; and hope of heaven, if hope of heaven could be perilled by such deep self-oblation—even her church was not in her thoughts. It was not that heresy triumphed: it was not that the misbelievers would, in this day's work, destroy that best hope on which the English restoration rested: it was that he must *die*—that he, the image enshrined as with a glory in her heart—that he must be no more—and the glory departed.

Long, long was the dismal way; the day was beautiful and bright, and the heavens serene and clear; and the sun shone, gilding with his ascending beams this great and glorious sacrifice. The crowd around was hushed, and still as death. You heard only the hurdle grating against the stones, and the tramp of the yeomen and pikemen; and you saw, but heard not, the foot-fall of those women.

At length they had passed the streets, and entered the broad and dusty way, bordered by green hedges and pleasant fields, which led to Tyburn tree: and there stood the black gallows, high and threatening, and the scaffold and the dismal fire, and the dark scowling butcher who was to minister to the law.

While the dreadful ceremony was consummating, those women stood apart and prayed. And when ~~all~~ was over, and his eyes were closing in death, ~~then~~ they kneeled beside him; supporting, with pitying hands, his fainting head; and she *did* wipe the death-dew from his poor pale face, and the blood-drops from his tortured breast—while her dove eyes, patient, soft, compassionate, were bent on his; and as his closed ~~in~~ death, their last slow, lingering, loving gaze was ~~here~~—treasured in her heart for ever.

No, never—never!—sleeping or waking, alone or ~~in~~ company—sorrowing or suffering—it was always there.

It was over: with a sort of death shudder the ~~soul~~ had departed. They all three stood some few moments, to be certain that all was indeed over; and ~~then~~ they turned, and slowly took their way to their obscure lodging again.

The tears dropped one by one upon the clasped hands of holy Mother Anne, and upon the rosary hanging between them, and low groans broke from time to time from her aged heart; but that young lady and that young man neither groaned nor wept; they walked in silence, side by side, along the streets, with firm, composed steps; their faces bore both the same expression, though of so different a hue; for hers ~~was~~ white and colourless, and fixed as statuary marble—and his was all blurred over with patches, as it were, of a lurid red; but they both looked stern, resolved—fixed in purpose—and in that purpose you might see there

would be no pity, there would be no flinching, there would be no fear.

They had hardened to stone, as it were, in that dread passage of their lives; and so they remained.

One passion alone disputed in the young man's heart the desire for revenge: but there was nothing to answer it in hers. Mortal man existed not, who now could move her heart to throb or falter. It was, indeed, as if all soft affections had died or departed with *him*. Robert knew this by that sort of divination common to lovers: he submitted and adored in the deepest shrine of his own dark and shrouded heart. At that moment he felt the same disgust against all the joys of this world, that this pious creature did.

They came back to the small dark obscure lodging that the two ladies had taken. It was one of those old houses common in London; the upper floor overhung the lower story—so that the lower rooms were rendered very gloomy; indeed little light could penetrate at all through those small leaded casements of glass. The apartment they entered was very low overhead; the floor was of stone; and the only furniture, a sort of dresser and shelves for plate or pewters, and a few dark wooden chairs. They all three walked in—and poor old mother Anne, quite tired out, fainting with fatigue, sank down upon a chair, and groaned with sadness and with weariness. You should have seen how gentle was that young lady's demeanour. She still preserved her passive composure, and she did not speak; perhaps she could not do that; but she went up and took that aged woman's withered hand, and pressed it between

drink till she was refreshed.
then said,

“ Drink, dear daughter, for t
thy tongue cleaveth to the roof

But she shook her head aga
way, and set the can down with

He was leaning against the
the room watching her. Then
out of the water, drank of it b
the wall, against which he leane

And now the young lady
brown gown of serge, and there
it; and she looked at them once
middle of the floor, little heedi
any one was there but herself;
her bosom she took her napkin;
and lace it was, but it was stain
and with blood. She looked
her head again slowly once or t

and in it she placed the gown, but the handkerchief she had replaced in her bosom, and then she stood up again in her white garments, fair and spotless as a bride's, save that the dust of the way had somewhat discoloured the skirts. And she passed her hand over her small, beautiful head, cropped and shorn like that of a friar; and took up a small sort of hood, such as our aged women of the commoner sort wear; it was of black silk of Lyons; and she took a large funeral looking black cloak, and wrapped herself entirely up in it—and it was as if the moon was shrouded in a cloud, only her lily white small hand that held the cloak, and her pale face above the velvet garnishing, were to be seen, gleaming in that dark room and then she sat down as one in expectation: the poor aged nun seemed to have sunk into a sort of doze. Then Robert moved across the room, and sat down upon a chair near the Lady Grace; but they never spoke to, or even looked at, each other.

Presently a noise as of a carroch approaching, was heard down the narrow street: and a grand stately carroch was seen coming along, with four coal-black horses, and liverymen, and all those grandeurs which have been lately brought by our gallants from France; and it stopped at the door. Then the young man rose and took her hand, but she withdrew it, looking at the nun; and he quietly and reverently stepped up to her, and tenderly roused her, and she made a little start, and then she cast her eyes in a sort of mazed way about the room, and seemed to expect that he should speak; but he did not speak, he only signed to the window and to

deposited it reverently in the carro
back to where she stood in her
And oh! but did not he long to l
trate at her feet, and kiss the ve
she trod. He hesitated—he tre
that other white hand from its sal
gave it him; and he pressed it, an
to his lips, and she looked as a h
kneeling saint, with her calm, and
to which he responded by one
meaning; and then he led her to
her in too, and the voiture drove a

Here ends the Frag

It was gone—the little dark al
He stood some time lost in musing,
that end of the little lane by which
the houses were toppling over he
crazy-looking peaked roofs, and sm

her return; and he walked down this narrow alley, and threaded many a close, narrow street, where the high houses of black and white wood, arranged and ornamented in every imaginable grotesque variety, almost met overhead. There were very few people to be seen, for he kept to the more lonely and deserted parts of the town; and at last he came to a large, gloomy, ruinous-looking old house of six or seven stories high, every story being unlike the other. The lower one was, as usual, overhung by the others, and was gloomy and unornamented. Of the upper ones, some ran in little richly carved arches, with small window eylets between; some were one line of casements of diamond-paned glass; some were ornamented in roses and corbels of black wood and plaster. It was all very rich, very complicated, very gloomy, very ruinous, and very old. The panes in the windows were many of them broken. There was an air of loneliness and silence about the whole mansion;—something in its aspect that made you feel sure not only that it was uninhabited, but that it had been uninhabited for a very very long time.

There was a low, heavy, richly-carved oak porch, before the door; which door stood, indeed, so far back, that it was quite shaded in darkness; so that you could scarcely see from the street whether it was open or shut.

Robert looked up the street, down the street, and around all was silent and still; he slipped with a noiseless step into the porch, took out a pass-key, and let himself into the house.

The house within was very noble and stately; there was a very rich carved flight of oak stairs, which met your eye as soon as you entered the hall; which hall, being carved up to almost the very roof of the house, though it was not very large, had a very grand effect. It was almost lined with carved oakwork, which rose story above story, as it were, to the ceiling, all overlaid with rich ornaments; but the whole was so covered with dust, so hung with cobwebs, that a more melancholy and faded piece of magnificence cannot be well imagined. There was not a living thing to be seen, or sound of living thing to be heard: so still was it, that the roar of the distant city was like the music of a mighty cataract in the lonely woods, and only seemed to make the gloom and silence more impressive.

The young man paused, lifted up his eyes to the ceiling, then let them fall somewhat mournfully on the cobweb tapestry of the rich carving; then he crossed the hall, and approaching a panel amid the arches and pilasters, touched a small piece of the ornament, which yielded to the touch; the panel opened inward, noiselessly he entered and it closed after him. A few steps brought him into a small apartment, surrounded by plain white plastered walls, and lighted from above by numerous little, almost imperceptible, openings in the roof, which, however, gave abundance of light into the narrow chamber.

There was a table in the midst covered with small books and pamphlets that seemed quite new, and as if they had never been opened: two or three men were sitting at this table writing in perfect silence:

you heard the quills against the paper, and that was all you heard.

Of these men, two appeared of more consequence than the rest; one of them, who sat at the head of the table, was a small dark man with remarkably bright piercing black eyes, rather sunken under his stern projecting brows. The expression of his countenance was very remarkable; there was a wily insinuation in the smile of the lip, a slow turning of the bright observing eye, that gave something of the sensation that the glittering eye and creeping stealthy motion of a snake produces on some people. In spite, however, of the wily smile and slow turning of the eye, never was countenance more marked with unflinching resolution than this was. It might have done for an inquisitor—human pity or relenting had no place there.

The other gentleman, soft, fair, handsome, and insinuating, was Mr. Darcy.

Both of these gentlemen now wore their priests' garments, and were tonsured. The stranger was the celebrated Father Parsons, or Persons, from the seminary at Douay, which he had been the means of instituting, and whence he had despatched so many young and hot-headed priests to England, charged to scatter those seeds of disaffection, which it was hoped might in time produce an abundant harvest: they were commissioned, likewise, to bind together the catholic gentlemen by secret oaths and engagements in one great though hidden union.

Father Parsons had rarely visited England of late, but he had now come over on account of a new, and,

as was at first thought, very promising affair then is agitation; and which he and the principal Jesuits hoped to make the foundation of most important changes.

This was the affair of the Earl of Essex: whose conduct for some time before that rash outbreak which occasioned his destruction, had been so equivocal, as to excite very great hopes on the part of both the two great religious bodies then in opposition to the government, namely, those of the puritans and the Catholics. The latter, more especially, from his conduct in Ireland and his dealings with Tiroen or Tyrone, had been led to conceive the most sanguine expectations, and to enter into secret understandings with him. His own objects, there seems little doubt, were merely to overthrow the existing ministry—the cabal as he esteemed it—of Robert Cecil, Raleigh, and Compton (the old Lord Treasurer Burleigh was now dead); and to force from the queen those concessions to his ambition, which his pride and obstinacy forbade him to obtain by more gentle methods.

His views with regard to the Catholics seem to have been limited to the obtaining for them toleration but their hopes were very far from being thus bounded. Nothing short of the ascendancy would have satisfied them; and with their then principles upon the subject of religious toleration, the consequences to the fellow-subjects of such a return to power may be divined.

Essex had likewise attached to himself the puritan party, that is to say, the party which then represented what is esteemed the liberal party now with us. He had become devout in spite of his dissolute habits, and

he had become a lover of liberty in spite of his greediness of power. A strange medley of the right and the wrong; the just and the unjust; of romance and sober sense; may be discovered in his views. But this very versatility enabled him, without the sacrifice of certain sentiments of honour and even integrity which he seems to have possessed, to unite the most opposite elements in his schemes. The union of opposite parties in designs such as his, may be considered, as Mr. Warner observed, ever as an evil omen for the public peace.

The Jesuits, whose vocation it was to fish in troubled waters, had made themselves particularly busy in this business, and Father Parsons, under the name of Dolman, had lately published a book maintaining the title of the Earl of Essex to the succession—a pretension so preposterous, that it seems wonderful a man so acute should attempt to support it. It is probable, however, that the scope of the publication was directed merely to the exciting fresh jealousies against the Earl, both in the queen and in her privy council, and thus to widen the breach already so large—and this part of the intention of the writer was certainly not disappointed.

Books and pamphlets of the most inflammatory nature (for the power of the pamphlet was by this time well understood) intended for circulation among the malcontents, lay mingled with this publication, and together with the “Philopater” of Father Cresswell, a book of most seditious description, covered the table.

It should be perhaps, added, that Father Darcy had insinuated himself into great favour with the Earl of Essex; whether under his own real character, or in one

their heads as he entered, but they continued their employment, never looking from the papers before them.

Neither of the superiors spoke in an attitude of expectation as he should address them, but he spoke

“The iniquitous and diabolical completed?” said Father Parsons, at length.

“It is over,” was the answer.

“You saw him die?—your waiting business had terminated?” said I shuddered.

“I saw it,” replied the young man, blanched not, nor did his colour change.

He was hardened as steel that had been in the furnace. A man is never the same after what he had witnessed.

“Did any thing especially wor-

themselves—the popular eye is not long fixed upon them.”

“ They died in silence—save some short declarations that it was for the cause of religion they suffered,” said Robert.

“ And our brother?”

“ As he had lived: courageously and nobly. He made a short speech in which he declared that it was not death he ever feared; and that, if to be of his religion, constituted man a traitor, no greater traitor existed than he; that here to this realm he came, as he confessed in defiance of the statutes made and had by the crowned queen of the kingdom, in order to minister the sacraments and such spiritual food as was needing to the true and faithful but famishing Church of Christ; but as far as disloyalty to the queen went, he would only say, might her majesty never find cause to believe that she had subjects less loyal than he.”

The two priests exchanged glances.

There was a pause, during which Robert seemed to eye with some dissatisfaction the heap of books and pamphlets with which the table was covered. And he took up a paper which, prefaced by an extract from the celebrated deposing bull of Pius Quintus, ended with an exhortation on the part of the pope to all good Catholics to lend their assistance either by open force or hidden conspiracy, to carry out its sentence into execution.

Such ways of assisting the great cause, such hidden approaches to their purposes, were not at all acceptable to that bold and fiery spirit; he trembled with

impatience to unsheathe the sword to avenge the martyrs, and assert the cause of religion by bold defiance and open battle.

“ You see, my brothers,” began the first priest, “ that for the present the secular arm is too heavy for us; and though the purposes of those are to be respected who have thus far adventured to deliver their brethren *à l’heretorum tyrannide*, yet things have not fallen out to our expectations, for few are the souls we have been able to rescue from the pit of Schism; and still less hath been our success against this heretical woman, lying under sentence of anathema, and most justly deposed from the supremacy of these realms. It hath, therefore, appeared good to us to adopt new measures, whereby a double triumph may be achieved, and the hard impenetrable heart of that accursed one be reached by a power which is more certain than the cup, and sharper than the sword.

“ Hitherto she hath defied the secret messenger of vengeance, and walked in security in the midst of dangers; but there is a force against which the panoply of steel, and thousands of surrounding watchful guards, are powerless. The heart may be reached by means more subtle than mandragora or steel—and such power we possess, and such power in due season will use For the present it is my counsel,” addressing the company, “ that ye separate, and disguising yourselves as best ye may, repair to your several hiding places, in the remote country houses of such noble gentlemen as still continue faithful to the Church: there to remain secretly confessing and exhorting as many faithful subjects of our

sovereign lord and father the pope as may be: administering the divine sacraments, and preparing the minds of the many for such fresh changes as time may bring about: teaching that which the sovereign authority of our common pastor in religion for the saving of souls hath declared, and absolving all and each one from their allegiance to this prime offender against religion; insisting upon, and repeating this declaration so long set forth."

"Why this is right," said Robert, coming forward, and stretching out his hand to take the paper, "this is a declaration of war—this is war to the knife."

"Patience, patience, my son," said the Jesuit, drawing back the hand which held the paper, "the times are not yet fully ripe . . . we must have patience and wait the hour."

"But how shall we have patience," cried Robert, "when this very declaration lays us under peril of drawing down upon our heads the dreadful curse of the Holy Father if we hesitate to obey its injunctions?—I repeat it, this amounts to a declaration of open war. It is a necessity laid upon us," said he, more hotly, "and the holy virgin knows with what joy I hail it—oh! let me but once"

"Gently, gently . . . my son," said Father Parsons: he took up another paper, and read "and for the curse that is provided against the Catholic people of this realm,—subject as yet according to the civil law, and still more under the prevailing tyranny to this unrighteous queen, they shall not in the cause of religion be held excommunicate for dissembling; and paying

seeming obedience to such decrees, as she from time to time may be pleased to promulgate,—always with a mental reservation, attending upon every act of obedience—”

The young man turned impatiently upon his heel. The father's eye followed him with severity.

“What is this?” asked he, with a stern voice, “what is this young man?—Can you presume?—do you dare to dispute the authority of your Church? Are we, or are we not to look upon you as one prepared to carry out her holy purposes in Christian obedience—as a true soldier of the Church Militant; or are we to regard you merely as a hot-headed wrangler, ready to thrust his head into every idle brawl?”

“Your pardon, father,” said Robert, in a submissive tone, returning to the table, “but my heart is all in a storm, and it is calling aloud for vengeance.”

“And thou shalt have it, my son,” said the Jesuit, with a sinister smile, “be sure, that in no very long period of time, a swift destruction shall overtake them all . . . the whippings, the famishings, the cruel oppressions, the bloody martyrdoms, are all registered where there shall be no forgetfulness and no remission. All—all shall be brought to their heavy and bloody answer. Be ye sure of it: this land shall be purged from the plague-spot of heresy, and restored clothed in pure white garments of sanctity, to the bosom of her mother Church: thou shalt live to see it, and thy hand shall wave both sword and brand when the day of her judgment shall come on. All I ask, laying his hand softly on the young man's bended head, “is obedience, silence, and patience.”

"And dissimulation," added Darcy, looking up at the still heated countenance of Robert, who started as if stung by a viper at the word, and the priest's hand fell from his head as he again lifted it up.

"Dissimulation," repeated the Jesuit deliberately; "and where lies the dishonour, or the sin? — with our enemies: they by their violence rendering such dissimulation necessary—laying us under the obligation as it were, of practising certain arts, for the disguising of our proceedings: with whom lies the sin? evidently with him who is its originator and primal cause. Will you never learn, young man, that it is the end which sanctifies the means? In a cause so holy as this, all minor considerations lose their character, and merge in the glory of the object proposed.

"If," pursued he, laying his hand upon the table with emphasis, "the malice of mankind renders secrecy and dissimulation necessary, in order to effect the grand purpose of the salvation of souls by reconciliation to the church; if the very end of such dissembling be—finally to put an end to all necessity for future dissembling by the establishment of our holy religion in this realm; see you not that it is, indeed, to obtain a victory over falsehood, thus to chain and force her to minister to the progress of truth. It is, indeed, to triumph over the kingdom of Satan, when his own devices are employed to overthrow his empire."

Robert looked rather impatient under this somewhat long discourse delivered in the father's most bland and insinuating manner.

"And how far is this equivocating sort of ob to be carried?" at last he said.

"Just as far as it is rendered necessary," replied the priest—"so far, and not one jot further: for, when circumstances cease to render any act of this kind imperative, it instantly loses of its character, resumes its ancient nature, and becomes a deadly sin."

"Amen," said Robert, somewhat irreverently, "and the sooner the transformation is effected, the better. For me, my heart revolts at such measures, and calls aloud for more vigorous action."

"And the call shall be answered, fear it not, my son," said Father Parsons. "All we ask at present is that reserve and caution which the matter itself renders necessary. There"—giving him a small paper—"you will find written the name of the place where, upon your departure from this, it is our wish you should carry yourself. You will find an abundance of friends impatient to receive you, and will perhaps hear news not altogether unacceptable to a benevolent and generous spirit. . . . We will now, for the present, dissolve this meeting. You, gentlemen," addressing the priests, "to your labour of love: our reverend father, pointing to Father Darcy—"upon his mission. I leave you, sir"—addressing Robert, and glancing at the paper—"I cannot doubt, are willing and ready to comply with the request I have there ventured to make to you. Gentlemen, good morning to you all, and a happy union under better auspices."

So saying, Father Parsons rose from his

and the company in the secret chamber prepared to depart.

The priests rose from the table, took off their clerical dresses, and opening some hidden recesses, assumed their various disguises. The tonsure was easily hidden by a small cap of hair affixed to the crown of the head; some assumed the dress of clowns, others of respectable burghers or citizens. Father Darcy appeared still more handsome than usual in a rich riding suit, and plumed and jewelled hat, carrying his sword and dagger with a grace and dexterity which might have well become the character he affected.

The Father Parsons on the contrary, was clad in deep mourning, and appeared like a decayed gentleman; he was to cross the seas, and his dress insinuated, in a seemingly careless manner, that there might be certain domestic and financial reasons which might render such a step necessary; this likewise gave a colour to the concealment and secrecy he found it necessary to adopt.

Before they parted, each gentleman took up from the table a portion of the books and pamphlets, and concealed them in various parts of their dress.

The evening was closing, as one by one the company quitted the deserted house, and betook themselves to their several lurking-places.

Robert stopped a few moments as he was crossing the hall, to examine his sealed paper.

"To Rushton Hall," was written in it.

He tore the morsel of paper to atoms, flung them on the ground, and then musing as he went on what was

next to be expected, crossed the threshold, and entering the dark and narrow streets, made his way to the obscure hostelry where his horse was waiting. He had the purpose to ride immediately down to Northamptonshire.

CHAPTER XVII.

“Fond youth give o’er,
And vex thy soul no more
In seeking what were better far unfound;
Alas! thy gains
Are only present pains
To gather scorpions, for a future wound.”

Quarles.

ROBERT, passing as has been said through several obscure streets, at last arrived at the small house of entertainment where his horse was standing. He entered the little inn yard which was surrounded by old wooden sheds rather than stables, of wretched appearance, and forming, with their slovenly beggarly attendants, a somewhat strange contrast to two or three excellent horses which were feeding within. Several young men, whose clothing of the most ordinary description could ill conceal their lofty bearing, were sauntering about the little inn yard, apparently waiting till their horses had finished the corn they were champing. But little discourse passed between them: every countenance was gloomy and preoccupied, and melancholy and defiance darkened every eye. Robert hastily wrung the hand of several as he passed; among others, a tall aristocratical looking middle aged man saluted him, with whom he did not as with the rest merely exchange a sentence or so, but taking his arm they together entered the stable where Robert’s horse was feeding. This gentleman, whose name was Thomas, you have been intro-

searching for his saddle and bidding
his departure—all which offices
own hands—the discourse was
dropping sentences.

“Where are you for?” asked

“For Northamptonshire; that
to detain me here; our orders
I shall do so,” with a meaning
head from buckling his girths, a
panion—“and you, where are you?”

“My part carries me to Scotland.”

Robert made a gesture of content.

“Not so,” said Thomas. “That
be done in that kingdom; our
piece of ware, that hath two sides
—the apparent colours being as
to shine in one direction or the other
with my metaphor, and come to find
it would be ours.”

easy to hate his enemies; and rely upon it, however, he may dissemble. The old cause of his mother is not altogether a lost one."

"Mere wavering policy," said Robert, disdainfully, "mere kingcraft, as he thinks. He has not, he cannot, reared as he has been in the darkest pit of heresy—he can have no reverence for this ancient and noble church in whose cause we are enlisted."

"He may have seen and learned things in that same pit of iniquity which even *he* might not have stomach enough to digest," said Thomas, "and trust me he has. We must not look for a saintly hero in a selfish bundle of protestant pedantry like this. Still less is he inclined to forfeit the closed crown of England for the crown of martyrdom. But I tell thee, man, that thing they call the heart, such as there is of it, belongs in secret to us, as in due time he will make appear: never trust me if it be not as I say."

Robert recollected what had dropped from the Jesuit as he enforced patience and dissimulation.

"Bide the time," added his companion; "we shall see other days in England yet. Our present virago is not immortal—Rome is determined, and Scotland, take my word for it, sure. I ride down there, and start at dusk. Farewell," said he, again wringing his hand; "we must drain the bitter cup to the lees, it seems. But the banquet is only begun: we shall have a dessert to this feast dressed more to our tastes, depend upon it, and that ere long."

"A fray?—retribution," said the other, impatiently; his head was full of the gloomy spectacle of the morn-

ject, he said, going up to him.

“ And how go matters in anc

“ She was in London,” said R

“ And what, in the name of t
her there just now?”

“ She was *there*,” cried Robert,
crimson, and with a gesture of il

“ Impossible !”

“ She was *there*—she held his
the death-dew,” he seemed cho
lection.

“ Holy angels ! of mercy !—a
she now ?”

“ On the way to Northampton

“ The spectacle of horror did n

“ The spirits of mercy do not c
vently, and in a softened voice;
do not die; they do not even dre
with their wings the terrors of the

alike be denied to me. But it is of no matter," returning to his usual reckless manner; "the struggle at least for both, I defy them to refuse me;" and springing upon his horse, he rode out of the stable-yard, and pursued his way northwards.

His friend gazed after him, his countenance filled with a sort of admiring interest. He mused a little, and then addressing himself to the saddling and bridling of his own steed, mounted and rode away. He passed through the dark, narrow, and devious streets, till he came to the banks of the river, where, among many other noble palaces, stood one pre-eminent among the rest, which belonged to the noble and suffering house of Northumberland. The wide gate was closed, and a certain air of desolation pervaded the princely mansion. Thomas knocked at a postern-door, and giving his horse to a serving-man who answered the summons, he entered. He remained there till dusk, and then about two hours after sunset he might have been seen to ride out, followed by two servants in plain clothes, and take the way which led to the great north road.

Robert pursued his way into Northamptonshire.

It was a beautiful summer evening, and he entered the wild and wooded country then lying round the neighbourhood of Barnet: at that time the most beautiful of sylvan wildernesses. The woods hung thick and dark around his way: a narrow and somewhat rugged path, over which the bushes nearly closed, while the honeysuckles and wild roses straggling upon

flies were gliding from side to side
ing in the woods; the blackbird
—what a contrast to the scene
paradise of God, to the hell of
nature, to the horrible institution
ing sunbeam—the sweet perfume
sounds of peace—the holy calm—
the wrangling crowd—the dust—
—the black threatening gallows!

Alas! the heart of the young
and burning sun—and black as
His whole imagination was suppe
poisoned, crimsoned over with im
darkness unredeemed save by that
which, collecting as it were all
some illuminating spirit in a dark
massacre.

The inspiration of the evening
sounds, and lights and shadows, we
—

and from him the words of gentleness and peace, which dropped from the lips of the divine Master, withheld—words with power to allay the tumult of the waters, and say to the raging storm of passion, be still, “And there was a great calm” Far indeed were such effects from those intended to be produced by the teachings of the men, to whom at present was almost entirely committed the guidance and moral education of this society. Far indeed from their intention by a well-directed training, to render the characters of those intrusted to their development well balanced and self-governed. It was their business to excite and to maintain those stormy passions in the human breast, which render man the inevitable prey of every one more cool, more calculating, and more master of his passions than himself.

So Robert rode on, and nature smiled on him in vain.

On the second day he reached the wide valley of the Nen: its meadows then, as now, rich and fertile, over-spread with flocks of sheep and herds of oxen—its steep slopes on the northern side covered with long lines of sweeping woods, remains of those forests which had sheltered the ancient Britons; the line of wood interrupted by frequent open spaces crowned with parish churches and peaceful villages.

He crossed the Nen by a ferry opposite to the town of Wellingborough, and following the road to Kettering, arrived ere very long at Rushton Hall, the magnificent abode of Sir Thomas Tresham. This splendid mansion had not then been long erected, and it stood white and

the court within.

In the centre of this was a splen
Robert made his way.

Rushton Hall still exists in all i
is situated upon the edge of a wild
glen, through which rolls the river
round it on every side, giving an ai
seclusion to this place, rendered into
memories.

In the woods, at a little distance
celebrated triangular summer-house
remarkable by the councils, which it
is said, been held.

The house was the abode of Sir
a man, venerable for his inflexible
religion, and interesting for the suffer
in the cause to which he was devoted

Many years of his life had been sp
in the eastern parts of England, as
man was at this time

man of a singularly calm and composed demeanour, had, whatever his internal convictions might be, so managed to preserve himself in good odour with the reigning powers, that he had never got into either disgraces or difficulties. He frequented London and the court, and, like Everard, was regarded even with a certain degree of favour; but his heart was deeply resentful of the treatment his father had received; and the desire of bringing down retribution on the heads of that government which had been the source of his family misfortunes, added fresh vigour to that deep yet restless ambition which was the leading principle of his conduct. He was at this present time engaged in secret but intimate connexion with the earls of Essex and Southampton, and had become a principal medium through which their communication with the Catholic party had been carried on.

Rushton Hall, secluded as it was, and hidden from observation by the thick foliage of its woods, was a very convenient place of *rendezvous* for those individuals of the party, among whom it was thought desirable that consultation should be held upon the present occasion.

The principal personages with whom this story has made you acquainted, were at the moment of Robert's arrival assembled there. Everard had been invited to attend, and answered the summons accompanied by the beautiful Eleanor; who, little taught by the principles she had imbibed to combat with or curb the passions of her heart, yielded to the temptation of again meeting one exercising so powerful a fascination

over her mind, and whose presence was so dangerous to her peace. She had made a pretence of a desire to visit the Lady Tremaine, who was at the moment residing at Rossmore Hall, in a sort of widowhood, separated from her husband, and choosing to keep herself secluded from the world.

Everard, ever kind and considerate of others, had yielded readily to her wishes: ignorant as he was, of the cause of those hurried spirits, those fleeting and changing emotions, and those deep and melancholy sighs, which caused him so much uneasiness.

Robert flung himself from his horse, and passed under the deep-arched porch: turned the gallery, and was received in the hall into the embrace of Everard—~~hands~~ were wrung in silence: and then Robert, flinging down his hat, sword, and heavy travelling cloak, followed Everard up the richly balustraded oaken staircase, and entered a large with-drawing room upon the first floor.

It was a beautiful room, its large oriel windows looking down upon the terraced garden, laid out in all the romantic and picturesque taste of that day, and commanding a view of the dark woody steeps, between which the river gushed and played. A huge open fire place, surmounted by a lofty carved chimney-piece, in the centre of which were the arms of the family in high relief, occupied one side of the room. The walls were set out with gilded chairs and dark hangings; and a certain sober and severe magnificence pervaded the scene, consonant to the taste of the unfortunate man who had erected this dwelling for his family, in

those days of peace which had preceded the present dissensions and jealousies.

An elderly lady of a dignified but gentle aspect, her hair white as the snow, rolled back, but not altogether concealed under her black silk coif, was sitting by one of the windows; and by her side the beautiful Eleanor was employed, according to the indefatigable custom of the day, at her embroidery. A book bound in purple velvet lay by her side upon the table: not a dark breviary or manual of piety was this—it was the “Arcadia” of Sir Phillip Sidney.

Francis Tresham dressed in black, the livery both his mother and himself had assumed since his father’s last imprisonment, was pacing up and down the room.

The young lady started up from her employment as the door opened, for she well knew whose arrival was hourly expected; she coloured—turned pale—and then hastily resuming her seat, leant over her work; the rich tresses of her auburn hair falling thickly over her face, and revealing its varying colours, as her heart throbbed nearly to bursting.

Robert entered with Everard, but seemed scarcely even to notice her presence, as Francis advanced to meet him, holding out his hand, and Lady Tresham saluted him with a serious but benignant air. The three young men advancing to where she sat, immediately entered into conversation; while Eleanor sinking with mortification, never once lifted up her head. But not one word that fell from Robert was lost upon her.

"And now they will have all who stand in London to witness the trial and execution of the poor woman to whom we have been witness?"

"Yes," said Robert.

"How can we help her?" said Robert. "What can we do to help her?"—it was they began to think—like any man like a woman being a woman in her own right."

"I will try," said Robert. "I will try to do what I can for her."—it was they began to think—like any man like a woman being a woman in her own right."

Robert turned away with a disappointed look, and said: "I will try to do what I can for her."

"But what can we do?" said Robert. "I will try to do what I can for her."

"I will try to do what I can for her," said Robert. "I will try to do what I can for her."

"I will try to do what I can for her," said Robert. "I will try to do what I can for her."

"She gives her orders to those who are very negligent in obeying them," said Robert, with some indignation. "It is easy for those who stay away from such scenes, to console themselves with these pleasing ideas; but there are," and his cheek kindled, "who love better to endure the distressing sight, and to support the

offer in his agony, than to amuse themselves with sympathies and hopes that the she tiger will spare her prey when she holds it between her fangs."

"There *are*?" said Everard, taking no notice of the rest of this speech, except to pity the irritation of his friend. "You are right, mine was indeed an idle humanity, but wert thou alone in thy labour of mercy?"

"No, there were two others stood beside me."

"And who were they?" said Lady Tresham, "for 'twas in truth a most Christian and pious deed."

"Mother Anne—and—"

"Mother Anne!—"

"And Grace Vaux."

"Grace Vaux!" with a shriek from Eleanor, rising hastily from her seat, and coming close up to where Robert stood.

"You cannot mean to say so—Grace Vaux!"

"There was one," cried Robert, his whole face glowing as he spoke, "whose soft feet disdained not to tread those flinty stones, walking lowly by that hurdle's side. There was one whose hands wiped the dew of death from that tortured brow: there was one whose heavenly eyes bent over and hallowed that dread sacrifice: there was one whose heart received that martyr's parting sigh: yes, yes, there was one woman found on earth who had courage and who had power to perform this work of piety and of pity . . ."

They all looked aghast. But over the eyes of Eleanor a dark cloud of jealousy and anger was gathering; for he, thus excited to the highest degree by the recollec-

Eleanor was left standing in
her eyes bent upon the ground.

Suddenly she started as one from
by the place where he was sitting
looking at him, hastily left the :

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Who loves, raves—'t'is youth's frenzy . . .
 yet still it binds
 The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
 Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds."

Byron.

ELEANOR went through the gallery, and then descending a small flight of stairs, came to a narrow arched door, which opened upon a green walk that led into the terraced garden. The lowest terrace, which over-hung the river, and was very broad and handsome, was terminated at each end by a sort of arbour, or, more properly, small chamber of yew, closely and quaintly cut, and ornamented with various figures in topiary work. The unhappy girl, her heart almost breaking with passion, traversed the terrace, and entering one of these arbours, flung herself upon her knees, stretched her arms upon the small sylvan table before her, and buried her face between them.

She did not weep: for Eleanor seldom wept: but stung and wounded to the quick by the words of Robert, she lay in a sort of convulsion of grief and passion, her bosom heaving as if her heart would burst.

So she had remained for some time, her mind, as by a succession of phantoms, filled with those distracting images which rage, jealousy, and disappointment invoke,

his hand upon her shoulder, and
voice, said,

“And what ails the fairest E

She started, turned half round
from her knees, and lifting up
face all discoloured and blurred
passion.

All the agony of love, jealousy
was painted there; her eye
desperate, turned resentfully up
said,

“You let *her* go then.”

“Her!—who?—where?” asked
her, “what does the beautiful

“Call me not beautiful,” said
tated beyond expression by the
voice. “Call *her* beautiful who
as the divine angel of mercy in
and before *his* eyes. Why—wh

And she flung from him, and again burying her face between her hands, sobbed with convulsive passion.

The Jesuit stood coldly by, watching the agonies of this ill-mastered and ill-disciplined nature: a slight smile of satisfaction just visible on his lip, as he contemplated that vehemence of weakness—if I may say so—which rendered mankind his prey and his slave.

Well he knew that he who cannot command himself is the bondsman of him who can; and well he counted upon this impetuous girl as among the most obedient and servile of his tools.

But he now assumed the tone and dignity of the office of director of the heart of man, and said in a grave and somewhat severe voice,

“These are strange words—when the child dares to arraign the decisions of her ghostly father.”

“But why?—why?”—again lifting up her head—
“Why did you mislead me? I had, you know I had, heard of this intended doleful pilgrimage. I prayed to be one: you forbade me—and assured me that others should be forbidden too: I had your faith upon it: and now, and now, not only *she* went, and *he*.... but *he* scorns me and despises me for my selfishness and my indifference... *he*... *he*... you played me false, father,” in a tone of indignation, “you know you did.”

She had lifted up her head, and her eye was sparkling with rage.

“False!” he said. “What do you mean—Rocollect yourself if you please, young lady, before you again dare to address me; I command you to retract that offensive

room—you promise—

quiet. the project should be abar

“ Promise ! ” he repeated—“ do you think me so weak, so i the superstitious obligation, of i call a promise, when the interest are concerned?—Promise!—to i the honour of the highest may i

She looked hard at him—as her own presumption.

He went on:

“ I should indeed be a mis being, unworthy to hold the community of holy church,” he ties like these could bind me, i Know, like the strong man of o fetters of tow, when the migl upon me. And what I pray a be the Dalilah to bind a Samp

Turning from her with cont

lowing him in a deprecating manner, as he paced with an offended air up and down the little apartment—"I am sure—I am grieved: I entreat your pardon, reverend and holy father—on my knees: from my heart I crave your pardon if I have offended,—"

"Offended!" said he, coldly, "that is a very soft term—yes," with a haughty and imposing air, which gave a very extraordinary terror to his blue eye and soft features. "You *have* offended—not me: I repeat it—I am the humblest of the servants of the church, not worthy to kiss the dust beneath the feet of the divine Master of us all: but as her minister I grasp her terror—and partake of her glorious privileges and dignities. And it is in her name, young creature, that I speak, when I say, that you have grievously and heavily offended."

She was quite subdued now; she had not a doubt that she was greatly in fault; he had broken the most solemn assurances and promises in the most flagrant and daring manner; but she had not a doubt that she alone was to blame—and heavily to blame.

She dared not now her storm of passion had subsided, question the propriety of his actions, even in the most secret recesses of her own mind.

"I humbly crave your pardon," she kept repeating as he suffered her to follow him up and down; not deigning by look or gesture to signify whether he heard her or not.

"I humbly crave your pardon," she repeated, weeping: for she was altogether subdued, all her jealous rage had yielded to the master's hand. She had

is the result of the tyranny of
of the honest conviction of the

So he let her go on for some
turning round as if wearied &
said,

“Enough! my time is precious
It was a childish outbreak—I will
and let us say no more of it.
severely, “my actions, the
proper to adopt, are not to be
judged of. It is sufficient that
this holy cause”—here he crossed
servant of servants, have been
of their vice-gerent. For what I
the now trembling young girl,
accountable but to one—the
unity to which I belong. Once
contest, think you not we are
insect-like creatures that hum about
at the feet of the great ones.”

“Sweet Eleanor—it grieves me sorely thus to remind you of your errors. Sweet penitent daughter, lovely, beautiful Eleanor, my heart is grieving for thee, even in correction my child, for it reads thine. Thou did'st then think it grievous, that before *his* eyes thou wert not allowed to shine in the hallowed light of piety, and self-devotion:—be comforted my child; *she* is not for him; and her path will lead to far other courses.

“She is formed of other clay than the sweet Eleanor,” said he, in a flattering tone: “her vocation is for the sainted sisterhood—the vocation of hearts insensible to the force of sweeter and tenderer affections. Eleanor was born in a happier hour. The joys of this life are for her. Fear not, sweet maid, this rival of thine is but as a cold moonlit shadow, which shall cross and darken *thy* path for a while: then shall she vanish from *thy* life's scene. And this man shall awake from a vain delusion, to worship a fairer idol and be blest in a happier love.” And he pressed her hand gently, while the colour flew across her cheek, her eyes were bent upon the ground, and the sweetest smile of recovered hope played about her lips.

She felt as if she could have fallen at his feet, and adored Mr. Darcy in gratitude for his consolation.

“Be constant, and be secret,” he continued, “and trust your happiness to time and to your best friend,” with an affectionate smile. “One thing only, let me counsel—that your brother shall be kept at present in ignorance of all this. Your maidenly pride, no doubt,” he continued, as the colour mantled to her cheek, “would lead you to hide this secret from all, save he

for ensuring your happiness .

Her brother ! Their conf
uninterrupted, for there ha
part of the father director t
the new views which had
mind, since the connexion
the Jesuit had begun to dist
usual system employed by h
weakening the family ties,
father director, between, as i
and dearly connected in blood

The secret conscience of E
telling her that what the pr
That, were Everard aware of
he would think he best coo
happiness, by insisting upon
told her that so it ought to
as in such cases it ever does pl
gence; and the subtle priest k

red or not as circumstances might admit. She serve to strengthen the tie which united Robert party; or she might assist in vanquishing the revolt of Everard.

the fate of the young creature whose peace he thus with, was, as he had once said before, indifferent as that of the leaves which were whirled and red by the wind.

"Go up, my soul, into the tril

MR. DARCY had returned to in the arbour, indulging in all reveries which are the distu He with Tresham, Robert, sitting round a table in a small several letters, mostly written before them.

"There is a curious crew ship of yours, Tresham," as thrown down a paper which "the gallant Catholic gentle the black visaged, preaching coalition between fire and wa

"Two powers of force : engaged to advance one great "and why not, sir?"

the royal lips, are quite sufficient to convince even the most distrustful, of the strength of his real sentiments. The outward demonstration must, we all know, depend upon the tone of those circumstances, and the strength of those interests, which can be brought to bear upon it. It must be our work, gentlemen, so to strengthen our party, by union among ourselves; and by a close alliance with any whose views coincide with our own; as to render it the interest of this Scottish pedant to declare openly for us. But time is invaluable, his present inclinations may change. The sooner the royal school-boy comes to the throne the better for us all. This old woman is very long in getting out of the way."

"One is wearied of her," said Tresham.

"And sick of attempts to get rid of her," added Robert, with disgust: for his heart revolted against the shedding of any further blood, except in open battle: he had not yet recovered from the effects of his first adventure of that terrible kind: "I hate and detest these cowardly attempts at opposition, which result only in the shame and scandal of our party."

"We will have no more of them," said the Jesuit, looking at Tresham—and then turning to Robert: "Did you not hear it said that there was a more decent, and quite as effectual a way—I suppose it little matters, as far as the life of the individual may be concerned, whether a heart be poignarded or broken."

Everard sat all this time, his elbow resting on the table, and his hand supporting his head, gazing fixedly at the speaker, who did not seem to attend to him.

"I have heard," said the Jesuit, after a pause, in

"I should have thought," said the heart had been made of better

"Better! you call it—well—

"He is entirely alienated
last refusal on the part of the
farm of the sweet wines, has
say she scorns to purchase his
and expects a free return of
influenced by consideration of

"The old woman is as rom
muttered the father sarcastical

"Our noble earl has lived
world," pursued Mr. Treaham.
especially when enemies so
leigh, and Cobham bear rule:
is, he has resolved to submit to

"And the old doting girl
ignorant what is for her own
coerced to adopt it. No to

ledged at once the successor, so soon as this noble earl shall have seized upon the reins of government. Nay, the old woman may chance to get a blow, or something of that nature in the hurry of the business—who knows? Such accidents are often unavoidable on such occasions. The Scottish king has given his secret pledges, that the Catholics shall immediately be recompensed by a general toleration and trust me, gentlemen, there is an old proverb about letting a finger enter, or something of that sort, if I recollect right: I think we shall find means to verify it.”

“I thought,” said Robert, “you intended to have no killing, or any thing of that kind, in this business.”

“Did I say so? . . . I believe I did, and in truth, though I spoke of an accidental blow or so, it was without much purpose of the sort; we aim at the heart; and, trust one who knows something of the workings of that little organ, let but that woman see the man she loves in arms against her power, and triumphant over her authority, and pride and love will do our business in less than a week: or I know nothing of such things.”

“It were to seethe a kid in the mother’s milk,” cried Everard, rising from the table in great agitation, “you do not, you cannot mean any thing so barbarous—so treacherous—so cruel! Robert, what are you about? How can you for one instant listen to such cold-blooded maxims? Draw your sword like a man if battle there must be, but have nothing to do with designs such as these.”

And he laid his hand upon his friend’s shoulder.

the young Daniel to come
force of a passion for one
and an infidel, has thus
respect to the duties call
party, I think it might be
man of such nice honour to
he may share perhaps only

"I am not about to betray
said Everard, "and as for me
me that our consultation was
the insuring the succession to
ration of our religion as the
You ought to have told me
queen were to be agitated; y
her; you ought to have believ
the man for such a purpose."

"We ought to have known
Jesuit, with a sneer, "I can
I cry peccavi—I ought never
determination—"

which, however, the most dogged determination to adhere to his own purpose might be detected.

"I ask you, Mr. Tresham," said Everard, "by what right you deceived me as to the purpose of this meeting, and led me into this hateful alternative—either to be treacherous to my sovereign, or to betray my friends?"

"I'll tell you what, Everard," said Tresham, assuming an air of candour, "you know my principles in these things: I never pretend to be such a fanatic for truth, as not to use a little innocent deception to forward a noble cause. Nay, you may look as indignant as you please: I tell you these are my principles, and every man has a right to act in accordance with his principles."

"It is news to me," said Father Darcy, "that the romantic feelings of a superannuated old woman, who would in her grand climacterick act the love-sick girl, are to be set against the interests of a great party and a great religion. Such superstitious observings may suit young gentlemen, who, having secured large estates, may find it convenient to abstain from taking part in the troubles of the times, but will scarcely be received as an excuse for their cowardly abandonment of a righteous cause and of an oppressed and suffering people. But I am sorry the young gentleman has been led by Mr. Tresham into a case of misprision of treason; and that he has run his own head into danger, in spite of his *known* prudence."

Everard was astonished at his own audacity, and at his own emancipation from the influence of such reasonings: but a few months ago, and the arguments and

the sarcasms of the holy father would have been powerful over his mind—but the force of true right thinking on the part of Mr. Mulsho, had had the happiest effects upon his temper. The Jesuit, as he had done once before, that his power was now present at an end; he did not however, feel the slightest distrust of being at some future period able to resist it; and whatever he might affect, he had no slightest apprehension that Everard would betray his friends.

“I am sorry,” said Everard, endeavouring to command his temper, “for what has been done, as I have heard: more however of these schemes must be excused from listening to: Tresham, I will tell your Mother and Eleanor—but be under no uneasiness, gentlemen, your secret is safe with me.”

And he left the room.

“Safe enough, I will pledge my life,” cried Richard again coming forward from the place where, a little while before, he had stood, listening to what was going on; “the peril to his own head and to his own estates in the event might undoubtedly be construed by our sage law into misprision of treason: and *that* will be argument enough with Everard for incurring the danger.

“Thou art a good fellow, Everard,” he went on to Tresham and Father Darcy think of thee what thou wilt; but take my advice, Tresham, and let him be to no more of these schemes. The times are not ripe for such men as he is—let him alone—let him go as he is happy with her he loves. Father Darcy, you must be kind upon him: Everard is a pearl of a man: th

not in the humour to rouse himself at this moment, and in a questionable affair such as this: but rely upon it when the time comes—if come it should—Everard will respond to the call. For me,” said he, resuming his wonted air of careless defiance, “I am a man shipwrecked and miserable, and just that sort of stuff from which you and Tresham make your tools.”

And they continued in secret council upon a subject, which finally resulted in the strange outbreak of the Earls of Essex and Southampton.

" For love it knows it is a g
To bear love's wrong than

A DESPERATE man Robert
a state of mind which fitted
prises.

In this state of mind Gr
structed to maintain him: or
schooled, and manipulated, if
expression, till she regarded i
neglect every consideration of
and devote herself to that rel
the natural bias of her charact

It was not by direct instructio
of Mr. Darcy to work. This
tomed sedulously to prepare
leave the proposed end to be
tions of their own passions.

penetrable than she had appeared under the gloomy pair of their last meeting.

She was walking in a grove of high trees which lay the south of the house, to which place she had been accustomed to resort for prayer and meditation, and to which place he had followed her.

But Grace Vaux was greatly changed since she was last presented to you.

The anxieties she had suffered, and the anticipation of the miserable fate awaiting one whom she revered deeply, had well nigh broken her heart before; but the horrible scene which her love and her devotion had led her to go through, had turned that heart, as she thought and felt, to stone.

A dreary, desolate, horrible sort of despair had taken possession of her mind. Her dreams were darkened by dreadful images of the past; her days rendered intolerable by harrowing recollections which made the sound of mirth, or even the mere voice of cheerful inference, insupportable. It seemed to her as if the whole earth ought to mourn in sympathy over such a fearful sacrifice; and her heart, revolting from the gaiety of those who with—shall we say, the happy insensibility of mankind—had already turned their thoughts to other things, she sought in deep solitude and the most severe religious exercises, some relief for her lacerated feelings.

The poor mother Anne, exhausted by fatigue and suffering, lay stretched upon her sick bed, unable to minister advice or sympathy, or soothe by her gentleness the agonies of this ulcerated heart. To

he had given his over-ridde
servants, and followed the path
told the Lady Grace had taken.

As he suddenly turned by a l
on the side of which a little kno
hanging in all the beautiful li
branches, he beheld the unhappy
along the winding path at some
him. The leafy trees and verdan
sylvan arch over her head: she a
tiful and saintly image, under
Gothic shrine.

As usual, she was dressed with
and the thick folds of her alme
shrouded, though they could no
pure outline of her most lovely fi

She was walking with a very
step, her hands were clasped acro
head bent in an attitude of des
ment

imagination and desperate force of sentiment which he possessed, gave an exultation to his ideas and feelings which approached to insanity.

To gaze upon her thus, was a rapture almost too great for his powers of endurance: but such rapture he did not allow himself long to enjoy. He had come with the determined purpose to learn his fate at once from her own lips; to obtain her for himself; break through as it were that holy circle of religious self-devotions which enclosed her, and bear her away to plunge with him into the mid-torrent of ecstatic joy: or, if that were not to be, he came resolved to break the bond which yet united them; to forsake her, his better genius as he felt her to be; sever himself from all those divine and softening influences which her presence inspired; and cast himself headlong without pilot, without compass, upon that raging sea of life, which he felt to be, after all, his natural element.

With purposes which, to his excited imagination took this sort of wild poetic form, he had come: and there he stood pausing, hesitating, gazing, before the fatal scene should be opened, the fatal words spoken, which were to decide his destiny for ever.

The winding walk which she slowly pursued, at last hid her from his view; then, as the beauteous image disappeared behind the meeting branches, he started from his reverie, rushed forward, and was at her side.

His rapid footsteps aroused her: she paused, and listened, without turning her head: he was by her side, and had laid hold of her arm.

“Grace—Grace Vaux!”

[illegible]

"What do you mean by your endeavouring still to withhold not let it go;—answer to what I say . . . what is it you mean?"

"You know well what I mean."

—To have thee for mine own, or to have done with thee for ever.”

She shivered a little, but said nothing.

“Grace,” he said, with increasing fervour, “be mine.”

Again the arm gently struggled to release itself.

“Nay, nay, listen to me—you must, you ought, Grace, to listen to me—you know how I love you. If thou dost not know,” with a certain solemnity, “vain it were for me to attempt to paint it. If thou dost not know the passion with which my soul is knit to thine, thou never canst comprehend, for vain were human language to express it.”

His voice faltered, he let go her arm, and turned a moment away. He was overcome with the image of his own thoughts and feelings as thus presented: his heart bled in self-pity.

He returned again, and again grasped her arm.

“Dost thou understand, Grace, this heart? It is capable, my soul knows it, of great and noble, and generous things: it is of the stuff—for once, think me not weakly vain to own it—of which saints, and heroes, and martyrs are made: but there is that within also . . . I shudder sometimes at my own thoughts . . . there is that within at which the demons in hell might tremble and look pale. I know not well how it is with me,” he continued with increasing vehemence, “I feel that I am born to figure among the best and the greatest, or to be held up as a monster among men; a monster at whose name from generation to generation the human blood shall curdle, and the very innocent child learn to tremble and stand aghast.”

[illegible]

Listen to me, my love—I want thee, Grace, to be my love; I want thee to come and hallow my domestic hearth; I want thee to illuminate by thy divine and beaming goodness, my darksome, lonesome home and heart; I want to have little prattling children—thy children and mine, Grace—climbing round my knee; I want to have their cherub kisses on my cheek; I want to be happy, softly, innocently happy with thee, my Grace; I want to have the blessing of God descend like dew upon this burning brain—Grace, I want to be among the blest; I want to be with God; I want to be with thee, my sainted angel mistress.”

“Robert, Robert,” and her colour came and went, and the beauteous eyes were seeking the earth, shunning his deeply, deeply loving gaze.

“Is not that a picture, Grace, even to win *thy* soul? Peace, love, piety, devotion, children, little children, Grace, reared to serve that Church to which we both adhere. Goodness—an example set which shall adorn our creed, so that our very enemies shall bless us. A life of tender protection and assistance to those on whom oppression lies heavy. A life of persevering endeavour in support of a righteous cause; a life of paradise! Two hearts, two souls in one—as one, mingling in every thought, action, feeling; a life! Nay, my Grace—nay, my sweet Grace, turn not your head away,” and bending down he impressed a kiss so pure, so tender, on her cheek, that the angels of heaven might have envied it.

But she started at the touch, snatched her arm from him, and turned terrified and offended away.

“You have dared!”

“ Nay, Grace, sweetest Grace.”

“ Stand off, Robert. Touch me not. Have done with your beguiling, dangerous words. Let me alone, deceiver and betrayer.”

“ Forgive me, sweetest, dearest Grace, I meant not to offend you, I call heaven to witness. Oh forgive me, forgive me this once.”

And he knelted down imploring, and took hold of her garments. She shook him off as if he had been a serpent, her soft eyes almost flashed with a wild and desperate expression.

“ Touch me not, speak to me not.—Why have I listened? What have I been about? Dreadful, dreadful! The spouse of my redeemer! and I have listened, listened aye, with pleasure, to the deceitful words of a perishing man. Oh Robert, Robert, what have we been about! Pity me and forgive me, for my sin to thee and to him hath been great. Thou must not speak to me of home and hearth, and sweet affection, and prattling faces and pleasant confidence. Oh, no, no, no; I am an affianced bride—the affianced bride of him the bleeding redeemer of us all. and what have I to do with thee, Robert Robert?”

He rose at once from his knees, folded his arms with a sort of desperate calmness: and fixing upon her his eye which had again lost all the feeling tenderness of its expression, and assumed one of deep gloom and dark, concentrated rage and disappointment said—

“ I thought I had your promise, not *that* I own, but your tacit—your understood promise, that my plead

ings should once be heard before your resolution was taken."

"It was so," said she—and her woman's nature here gave way, the tears ran down her cheeks, and she sobbed like a chidden child. "I had given you reason, Robert—I own it—I had given you reason to believe that I would hear your pleadings before I bound myself irrevocably. I yielded to my weakness, Robert. This heart—this heart!—Ah, this heart!" pressing her two hands against it, as if to still its beating. "Shall I own it? Those pledges were too—too—that promise, ah, believe me! it was but too sweet, too dear to my soul to keep it—and therefore," said she, her voice steadying as she went on, "the sacrifice was the more worthy and complete with which I offered my promise—my good faith to thee—that which was most precious in mine eyes—with this bleeding, bleeding heart—to him who claims our all."

"Your promises—your good faith! . . ."

"You know," said she, now approaching him with the gentlest pleadings of what appeared to her unanswerable reason—"we are commanded to hold all vows—all faith, light and valueless, in comparison with the one great claim." Then sobbing again: "I own it, Robert, when that man—that man whom I loved and honoured, as child on earth never loved or honoured earthly father . . . I vowed a vow—If the holy virgin by her efficacious intercessions, would save him, that before her shrine I would sacrifice all worldly hopes and joys: that I would devote myself a virgin for her holy sake—and forget—thee—and thy—thy foolishness, Robert."

by his tortures; my flesh chill
is, Robert; my very soul dark
his dismal death; in that ago
but to *his* feet, what offer i
and what was far dearer than
feel it now. Could I—would
lay festering in his bloody grave
have been—to be with the

A flood of tears burst forth—
tion, though still sobbing bitter

“At least the hours of pain
he was, all mortals must endure
to the heavenly mansions—at
as it was, might serve to soften
hold it?—Would you have b
faith implied to thee—Oh!—C
bond; the holier at that very
which rent it asunder.”

This speech broken with sobs
forth without — ‘ ‘ ‘ ‘

myself by the eternal vow, and separated us in this world and in the next?"

She bowed her head in sign of assent, but it seemed as if she could not speak.

"And who received that vow?" he said, sternly.

"Father Tesmond: Father Darcy had always warned me to be cautious in imposing such an obligation upon my soul. But the passion of my sorrow would brook no delay, and Father Tesmond received my vows—sealing them with that holy sacrament, which...."

"Enough," said he, turning away, "say no more: complete the sacrifice. You have offered our lives, now offer my eternal soul—for that was lost when thou didst this awful thing."

"Robert—Robert!" and she, in her turn, fell upon her knees and embraced his, lifting up her beseeching face in passionate ecstasy. "Robert, Robert—let me hear other words from thee—Oh, my despair! my despair! Offer thyself, my Robert, my Robert—offer thyself, as I, poor wretch, have done—complete the holy sacrifice: a fellow labourer at the same altar: Oh! Robert! Robert!—don't look in that dark and dreadful way, cast off the fearful demon that possesses thee, turn to the virgin mother—Robert—Robert!"

"I have nothing to do with thee, woman!" said he, making her from him. "Henceforward we are twain—my path is towards heaven—mine lies no longer that way—"

"Robert—Robert!" still holding him and kneeling.

"Have done," said he, fiercely, "for to the dark demon thou hast sacrificed a soul."

she had made, when she
still filled with the image
been confessed in her me
jected. She had scattered
have conferred so much
into a wilderness that gar
painted it, bloomed with
the holiest, the purest of a
generous self-devotion, she
where was her recompense

She had lost his soul—

His soul—

With those of her way o
deadly than that of final de
a dreadful sentiment of the
religion is apt to lead. T
accustoms the spirit to sub
is wanting. And the feeli
leads to desperation.

She had lost his soul—

is deserted by his better angel; and all the wild forces of his character, no longer harmonised and softened by the heavenly sweetness which breathed in her looks and accents, were rushing into the disorder of chaos.

Sacrificed he had been—and to what?

Alas! had it been to duty—to conscientious, indissoluble duty—they had both found consolation.

But it was to a superstition; a mere idea after all to which they had immolated their mutual lives; and what could all mitigate the bitterness of his disappointment, or of her despair?

So she lay long—groaning as if her heart would burst under. At last she rose from the earth, shook the dust from her soiled and disordered garments, and with dry eyes, that had already begun to assume a somewhat stony expression, so changed, so cold did they henceforth from that day become, she walked to the house, and went up to the room she called her own.

The chamber was simply arranged; but the view from the open casement was pleasant and cheering; a little bird, a bullfinch, on which Grace Vaux had expended, as she thought, most innocently, some of that overflowing love which her poor heart was forbidden to bestow upon others, whistled cheerfully in its cage.

It was all so pretty, so simple, so cheerful, so pure, so fair in this little cell.

A few days afterwards, and how was it?

The bed had disappeared; a hard straw pallet on the floor supplied its place; the little ornaments, few and simple, as they were, had all been taken away; the closed casement was darkened by a sort of screen or

blind, which excluded altogether the pleasant view. The little bullfinch was gone, and the pale, hollow-eyed creature who walked in deep melancholy up and down that dreary apartment, was already beginning to suffer from the slow and wasting fever of decay, as the hair-cloth she wore macerated her delicate flesh: rendered more susceptible to pain by the nervous excitement produced by her lengthened fasts and her unwearied prayers—by her mortifications and sufferings to atone for his crime.

It was all she could do for him now—and human passion and heavenly yearnings led her, poor forlorn and mistaken one, both one way.

CHAPTER XXI.

"In this world is much treachery, little truth ; here all things are traps ; here every thing is beset with snares."

S. Bern.

"FATHER, you have acted by me wisely, kindly, faithfully," said Robert, extending his hand to Mr. Darcy, "I thank you for it ; but your benevolent intentions have been frustrated and she is lost to me.

I am yours, therefore, body and soul ; do with me what you will, for I have henceforward nothing within me to call my own."

"Father Tesmond is pious and well meaning, but rash and superstitious," said Darcy, with a satisfied smile. "I lament, for your sake, sir, that our important affairs should have detained me at Rushton just at this juncture ; though—" and he corrected himself, "excuse me, much as I love you, if her vocation were a real one, sacred duties would have forbidden"

"Say no more of it," said Robert, "I understand all that very well : I thank you for what you *did* : let us not talk of what you *might* have done. You are a man to be trusted, Mr. Darcy, and will demand no vain and gratuitous sacrifices from any of us."

The father looked as if he did not exactly know how to take this equivocal compliment. He liked that a man of such a bold way of thinking as Robert should

esteem him for his freedom from superstition and prejudice: and yet, the destruction of prejudice and superstition was the destruction of his empire.

“I confess to you,” said Robert, “that if a soul is lost—a partisan is gained; with her, I should have become, I feel it now, unfit for much of the sort of work that seems wanted; quite the wrong sort of man for you, Mr. Darcy. *Now*, if you want any one to forfeit his head, or any such trifle—by giving a quietus to an old woman, or matter of that kind, you have a man ready to your hand. I know no one fitter than I am—in my present humour.”

The Jesuit smiled. This was exactly the humour into which he had trusted by persevering endeavours to bring him; it had been done to his hand in a manner as unexpected as agreeable; he blessed Father Tesmond's zeal in his heart, and cast about in thought how best to reward him for it.

But what he said was—

“No such desperate enterprise as that—we shall leave our best friends, the earls of Essex and Southampton, to provide what is fitting for her grace; but we may count upon you now, I conclude, to join in our councils at Drury Lane, and reckon upon your sword if swords should be rendered necessary.”

“I am your's or any one's: dispose of me as you will: I have told you I have broken from my anchorage, and am tossing upon the ocean of life, ready to follow in the wake of any who thinks it worth while to take such a water-logged vessel in tow. But I would rather it were you than any other, because I honour

our enterprise, admire your genius, and thank you for our services."

The triumph of Mr. Darcy over the mind of Robert was now complete. It is impossible to describe the gratitude that was excited by this sacrifice, as he thought, on the part of Father Darcy, of religious prejudices and opinions for his sake.

He was quite a man to value, as the highest mark of friendship, a deviation in his favour from what was right.

We, who esteem the conduct of those who would have endeavoured to restrain Grace Vaux's religious self-devotion within due bounds, as just and wise, can form little idea of the strange effect which this conduct, which he considered as a great deviation from the duty of a priest, exercised upon Robert's mind.

But the priest had not quite done with the subject. It may be thought that to so deep and sagacious a politician—one engaged in intrigues on which the fate of nations depended—would scarcely have found leisure for, or felt interest in, those domestic passions which in the comparison appear so trifling. But it is the favourite policy of these reverend fathers to rule mankind by their weaknesses. And among human weaknesses, what so fruitful of consequences as this master passion of youth—and the host of passions which thence take rise. 'The fate of empires, the triumph or defeat of a widely-influential principle, has depended upon a smile. And the fathers of St. Ignatius were far too discerning to neglect the use of such means. So Mr. Darcy said,

"You are indifferent, it would seem, to those consola-

tions and compensations which ordinary men usually seek under your circumstances”

“Yes—consolation I despise: in compensation it seems to me like blasphemy to believe. No, father, I am one of those who risk their whole upon one die; and never throw twice.”

“And yet—but I am as an innocent child in these things,” said Mr. Darcy, checking himself; “I know not . . . Yet this I know, that I am perhaps of too compassionate and soft a temper, and—I confess my weakness—when I see a sweet young creature fading in silence for want of one comfortable word, I cannot resist a desire that such a word should be spoken.”

Robert coloured at this, and said—

“I have always considered it extremely dishonourable in such case to offer the vain incense of words when I had nothing else to offer.”

“And yet, if that which you call vain incense be as the spirit of life to the one who shall inhale it . . . if it be a healing medicine to a sore and wounded heart . . . if all that heart asks is but some kind influence of this sort to soothe its agonies?”

“Father!” said Robert, with some surprise.

“Nay—nay, do not misunderstand me—I want no sacrifice of that truth, that sincerity as you deem it, in which the fond heart of youth delights almost to fanaticism. Such incense, as every man of your age is held bound to offer to every beautiful woman of hers, I should have thought need not in common kindness and good manners have been withheld. It is enough to treat her like the rest of the world. I should have thought not

with slights and contempts such as no woman expects to receive from any man."

"I never intended it—I never did it. Truth to tell, I have thought little about it. My heart has been deeply engaged with another . . . I have thought little of her, I own it . . . but—"

"It is that of which I complain. It appears to me, to mere looker on as I am at that game of human life which others are engaged to play, it seems to me something like the wanton cruelty of a school-boy, to kill with careless neglect that which we hold in our power—but the subject is beyond the limits of my prerogative, you will say, and say truly—let us speak of something of higher import."

"Ay, let us speak of something else—for *that* work is also done."

Robert stood with his eyes bent upon the floor, and a flood of recollections passed through his mind. He had, as many men might have done, in spite of his devotion to Grace, felt a secret inclination to gratify his vanity, and to indulge a hidden pleasure at having inspired a beautiful young creature with a passion like this. He had responded to it with some of that vain flattery of words and attentions, which he knew to be the most effectual means of maintaining his power: but he lately resisted this inclination. He loved Everard, and he felt that it was to wrong the confidence of his friend; he loved Eleanor, too, as a brother might have done, and he felt it was to trifle with her heart. He had therefore been rude, negligent, according to his usually exaggerated way; nay, almost brutal in his

to acquire a force which
recollect, with a certain
hidden passion which he
contempt upon his own
strongest of all temptations
through Eleanor the heart
touched—be wounded: 1
in Robert's nature—rever

Withdrawn from the
presence of Grace Vaux
him, his heart filled with
her sake, against her who
upon her cruelty through
which added force to his
ciple inclinations.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ O, how art thou betray’d, thus fairly driv’n
In seeming triumph to thy own confusion.”

F. Quarles.

SOME space of time has elapsed.

It is the 8th of February: a dark gloomy morning, London is enveloped in a cold damp fog which rises from the river, and the courts and gardens of Essex House look blank and miserable enough, in spite of their magnificence.

The great gates of the court are closed, a man standing at the small wicket admits one by one, those who knock for entrance.

The court within is one agitated mass of waving waters, it is filled with gentlemen—a mob, if it may be called, of gentlemen all richly dressed according to the fashion of their times, their swords and rapiers by their sides or already drawn and in their hands. There is a hubbub of many voices, a going to and fro, up and down the flight of steps by which you ascend to the great hall. Every one seems excited; every one busy; it all is confusion. There appears to be little direction or purpose; all these turbulent spirits are got together, and being got together; they seem scarcely to know how to proceed.

Among the gentlemen present, and the most busily engaged of the whole, you may note the young and

gates and of all sorts of opinion. Several Catholic priests in sect mingled with puritan divine cloaks; some of the priests at garb of the very men whose piety. Such are the strange devices of

Mr. Darcy has however taken aloof upon this occasion. It is a course of policy to take a promiscuous enterprise he is so busily engaged of the result of this enterprise doubtful expectation.

He considers it as it is, as the work of a rash, and ambitious, and whose character, a confused and bad elements, renders him equal to a government, or to be the revolt: for Essex is at once ungovernable, ambitious, and generous, grasping, affectionate, and unscrupulous.

Divided as she was between her partiality for the man whose energy and originality of character interested her so much—and indignation at the ungrateful treachery, and the mean and grasping covetousness, which lay concealed under such noble and generous dispositions.—her steady resolution to punish the state criminal was not suffered to yield to the melting pleadings of her heart for the man.

The Jesuits did not calculate ill when they used their influence to foster this idle revolt. They had aimed in vain at the royal heart with their poignards; they changed their tactics, and struck home.

The share they had in this strange business, in spite of the little scruple their writers display in colouring history, may be easily detected by numerous slight indications.

That Essex was not only instigated but betrayed by the priests, his own exclamations would lead one to suspect: and the secret unknown delator, whose confession ruined him, was probably in his view when he made the accusation. Certainly, nothing can strike us as more strange, than the motley assembly at Essex House upon that fatal morning.

From the Puritan ministers preaching to the crowd, to Tresham holding the door where the queen's officers of state were confined—from Essex rushing forth into the streets to denounce the danger of a Spanish successor, to Tesmond and Winter with the very party with whom he is in league, at that very moment in Spain, engaged in promoting the infanta's interests—all is one inexplicable confusion.

179, is the probable solution. A plan which seems effect; for until the Spanish cured the king from such kept terms with the Cath afterwards in the most insult

The clamour and noise in all counsel or well-ordered speaking and arguing, sworn men running to and fro, head of the flight of step tion that can be called, whic posing and rejecting of mea and irrational.

If you look among the agi to and fro—you may see Robe poignard stuck in his belt, a undrawn by his side: he is excited group to another, w upon his line

had pledged himself to be present upon this celebrated Sunday morning), anticipating the result of efforts so feeble and vacillating; and regarding his own imprisonment and probable death as a traitor, with that sarcastic indifference which was a part of his character when not excited by some strong passion.

Everard is not there. He is at Goddeshurst, enjoying all the delights of his Evelyn's society, or at Dry-stoke, preparing for his approaching nuptials. The wise counsels of Mr. Mulsho, and the influence of Mr. Warner, have effectually weaned him from the prevailing spirit.

Who knocks at the wicket, and demands admittance on the part of the queen?

It is the Lord-Keeper—the Lord Chief Justice of England—and two other noblemen of weight and experience, whom the queen has despatched to remonstrate with the still secretly beloved child and favourite, and endeavour to reduce him to submission before it is yet too late.

They are after a short parley admitted, but without their servants; and they stand defenceless among a crowd of young men, excited almost to madness, and all in confusion.

“Kill them!—kill them!” resounds on all sides. These gentlemen seem scarcely of the generous blood of Englishmen; but still there are those among them who will not permit an outrage like this.

Essex and Southampton descend the steps hastily, and followed by a crowd of the better order among the mob of partisans, speedily surround the captives.

fore this disorderly and tumult
what are the grievances of whi
to complain; promising that
loyal subjects ought to do, at
she will listen to their compla
be, and see indifferent justice d

The answer to this grave and
long and reiterated cry of "Th
time—Throw the great seal in
mouths—Down with them—K

Essex like many a leader of
him, and many, and many, and
finds himself already no longer
has conjured. He with some c
friends, rescues these hostages fr
itude; they ascend the steps a
there they are strictly confined t
Tresham, who, his drawn swo
tector, or as gaoler, guards the

.

Why a cry about the infant and a plot against the life of Essex—A cry without enthusiasm, an accusation in which no one believes—And with that a sudden outbreak and rush into the city: a rush made, not from that irresistible impulse of sudden passion, which impels men to follow and sweeps them forward in its wild career, but as an expedient, because there is really nothing else to be done.

They sally forth, some with swords drawn, some without swords at all, and give the intended cry: but the city is cold—the city is still. No cry of—“Clubs!—Clubs!” rings through the streets to rouse the combative apprentices; the master tradesmen close their doors; the authorities of the city preserve order without the slightest difficulty; and the mortified lords, with their followers, return to Essex House again, with the last sad determination of the defeated, to sell their lives as dearly as they can.

Robert was not among those who had rushed forward into the city; the outburst had appeared to him all through like mere child's play. Neither was he among those who, during the earl's absence, stole away from degrees and abandoned the hopeless enterprise.

He remained with his usual resolution to await the event, and was among the first to meet the fugitives on their return with the intelligence, that the hostages had been set at liberty by Sir Ferdinando Gorges and were gone back to the place whence they came.

The sudden change to be read in the countenance of Essex; the glance of pity and tenderness which he cast for one moment upon the young and beautiful South-

ampton—victim of his brainless enterprise; told at once that all was lost.

The spirit of the earl sank at once into despondency, and he was for a surrender, but urged by the representations of the gentlemen around, that it was better to die in their own defence than by the hand of the executioner, he prepared at length to defend his house to the last extremity. Leaving his friends to strengthen the defences, he retired to his chamber, where he burned several papers: those very papers, in all probability, which would have revealed the full share our friends had in his plot.

The subsequent attack and the subsequent surrender are matters of history; the earl and all his friends yielded at discretion, and were cast into various prisons; Essex and Southampton and others of note received the honours of the Tower. The other gentlemen are lodged in different dungeons and strong places in the city.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend ;
More hideous than the sea-monster."

Shakspeare.

THE enterprise had failed.—

Had resulted merely, as it would appear, in the detection of the once flourishing favourite, and the dispersion of his party.

Essex perished on the scaffold. Sir Christopher Mont, Sir Charles Davies, Sir John Danvers, and several others, the leaders of the conspiracy, shared his fate. But the government was extremely lenient with regard to the rest. After imprisonments, various in duration and severity according to the prominence of the part they had taken in the outbreak, they were dismissed, and returned to their own homes. The eternal dissensions of the party, which arose between English secular priests and the seminarists and monks, occupied the short remaining period of the queen's reign; and there was a cessation of the plots against her life.

Men's minds now turned to the successor : and the political intrigues of the Catholics were directed either to obtain those pledges from King James, and submission to Rome on his part, which might insure their ultimate ascendancy—or else, to secure their purpose by

opposing his claims, setting the infanta upon the throne of England, and thus finally establishing the Spanish influence.

The enterprise, as far as Essex was concerned, had failed.

But not so the schemes and purposes of the Jesuit. *He* had succeeded; he had pierced that royal woman to the heart; and the short remaining period of her life was but a record of that secret and rapid decay which follows an incurable wound.

From that hour, when the axe of the executioner, under her warrant, had severed the head from the quivering frame of him she loved best—perhaps now loved alone upon earth—the days of that unhappy queen became one series of struggles between the pride of a high and haughty heart, endeavouring vainly to disguise its own weakness, and the irremediable sorrow which festered within.

From the trembling fingers playing on the virginals, on the morning of the fearful execution—till the day when, after splendid pageant had succeeded to pageant, progress to progress, banquet to banquet, the body sinking under the increasing effort to conceal the bleeding heart with an appearance of gaiety—the fainting woman asked for a staff to ascend the Lord Bathurst's stairs—all had been the last effort of her expiring energy to support the dignity of her sceptre and the majesty of her sword of justice, by concealing the immensity of the cost at which such dignity and such majesty had been maintained.

Far more painful, and quite as severe as the assassin's

life, was the wound thus inflicted: the insidious enemy sat concealed in mystery, smiling at the certain result of his designs.

There sat that aged queen, her figure attenuated and reduced almost to a skeleton, her face shrunk, withered, and covered with wrinkles, her bright eye quenched, a monument of mortality.

She was sitting upon a few cushions, raised from the floor so as to form a sort of divan; and supported by others which propped up her sinking frame on all sides. There she sat in melancholy silence, and mused upon the ingratitude of friends: upon the fading nature of human greatness: the empty vanity of human popularity: upon the fallibility of human councils: the uncertainty of human principles—upon the short dream of feverish existence, which with her was now fast drawing to a close; darkened by the final triumph of evil over her best considered plans, and by the baseness and inconstancy of mankind.

Sorrowful food for her far-searching and reflecting mind; cultivated by philosophy—habituated to rumination—and in spite of many foibles and many faults, possessed of perhaps the most penetrating genius, and one of the loftiest and most affectionate spirits, that ever adorned her sex.

She looked round.

Her friends, where are they?—They are all gone.

The cold grave has closed over the faithful and devoted servants of her youth; those who had stood by

and struggled for her in the turmoil and heat of the day, Burleigh, Walsingham, Hatton ; Sidney, the delight of the human race ; and Leicester, the too fond delight of her own heart. The grave has swallowed them all.

Those whose councils had animated, whose wisdom had aided, whose affectionate devotion had cheered her in that long and terrific struggle, maintained for the rights of the human conscience, and the emancipation of the English crown and English people from the dreaded Roman sway—they are all gone.

Those who remained, Raleigh, Cecil, Cary, what ~~are~~ they all engaged in?—intriguing with her successor, counting with impatience the few weary days in ~~which~~ the sceptre of England shall yet be grasped by her ~~once~~ mighty hand.

“Gone to salute the rising morn.”

And the solitude and the darkness of deserted old ~~age~~, descend upon her in all their bitterness.

And he, the child as he might be called of her old age, the loved, the indulged, the petulant, yet the most interesting of beings—where is he? Alas! he is sleeping in that bloody shroud to which her own hand has consigned him.

She had doted with the blindest partiality—And yet with the strong determination of the lion-hearted, she had vindicated the authority of that sceptre which she had herself warned him, in all his eccentricities, to forbear to touch. She had vindicated the sceptre: and broken her own heart.

Yes, and bitter was the thought, the powers of darkness had triumphed. Those ambitious iron-hearted

priests, those cruel and conspiring adversaries, those deep dissemblers, those equivocators, those liars, those enemies of conscience and of truth—yes they have triumphed, she feels that they have.

They have seduced from her side that last heart on which she could have leaned; they have wounded her to the life; they have struck through Essex.

“Ah, bitterer than a serpent’s tooth, it is to have a thankless child!”

A thankless child,—and a thankless people.

He whom she had treasured as the secret darling of her aged heart, had ridiculed, insulted, and betrayed her; had aimed at her crown, perchance at her life; and had fallen before the unflinching sentence of the law.

And her people!

Her people! her loved people! for whom she had suffered, toiled, struggled, agonised—cheered by whose love she had triumphed over her foes, the haughty, imperious Spaniard, and the insidious Frenchman!

Where are those loud clamours of welcome which saluted her, when with all her queenly magnificence, but with eye most loving, and voice most gracious and benign, she came among her people, young, prosperous, beloved, and happy?

Now they receive their aged worn-out queen with sullen silence; that cold, disapproving, awful silence which makes the heart of the boldest to tremble.

They are weary of this long and prosperous reign.

The very ass shall spurn at the hoary lion.

These base, vain, idle, inconstant hearts, are gaping after a successor. He is a new man—there will be a

with something of the s
that should succeed when
ber in the grave, and she
to the Master of all men.

The deep and profound
queen at last fell, was the
strong sensibility which he
stood; of that affectionate
ready susceptibility to imp
restrained at times by her
at others would break out in
sured, not as the frailty and i
woman's heart and nerves—
~~true~~ woman—but to be bran
and barbarous caprice of a

Yes, even her good name

Her malignant and unse

She has to anticipate in bitterness the darkness which shall hang round her memory. Her great sun goes down in clouds.

There she sits, a melancholy monument of the instability of human things: a worn-out labourer robbed of his reward.

In vain her ladies endeavour to soothe her ; to persuade her to take refreshment ; to rest her weary limbs in her royal bed.

That couch is haunted by strange spectres, and she dares not lie down.

In vain they endeavour to lead her to speak, to unburden her bosom of its sorrows. The desire for human communication is at an end: the gay spirit which animated her is extinguished, she only wishes to be left to the gloom of her own thoughts.

Thus her beloved godson, Harrington, found her on one of the last visits which he paid her; the passage is well known, and yet I cannot resist the temptation of inserting it here.

“ I find some less mindful of what they are soon to lose, than of what perchance they may hereafter get. Now on mine own part, I cannot blot from my memory's table, the goodness of our sovereign lady to me her watchings over my youth, her liking of my free speech, and admiration of my little learning and poesy which I did so much cultivate at her command, her bettering the state of my father's fortune (which I have, alas ! so much wasted), have rooted such love, such dutiful remembrance of her princely virtues, that to turn askant from her condition with tearless

tionate of heart and so ch

“ I found her in a mos
archbishop ask me if I h
with reverence, that I h
Deputy (Essex). She h
and grieve in her counter

“ ‘ Oh now it mindeth
saw this man *elsewhere*.’

“ And hercat she dro
bosom. She held in her l
she often put to her lipp
seemeth too full to lack me

“ Her majesty enquired
written, and as she was f
brain; I was not unheedfu
read some verses; whereat
pleased to say—

“ ‘ When thou dost feel
these fooleries will please th

which attends upon old age—that melancholy without alleviation as without hope—the melancholy of deceived expectation and disappointed kindness.

Oh, grave!—oh, death!—thou whom the sprightly prince of courtiers* in his graver moments considered, not as the spectral king of terrors, but as a grave majestic woman opening her kind arms to shelter the unhappy—Oh, death!—take the aged to thy bosom before the illusions of the heart are altogether dissipated.

Why dost thou linger? Take this royal sufferer—take this mournful woman—take this feeling heart which now overflows with bitterness—take her, take to thy rest.

* The Prince de Ligne.

CHAPTER X

"Nothing can come c

It is over—she is gone.

She lies cold and statue-like
many wise, many great, many
the world, the careless, though
unmindful of its treasures as
heroes as they sink behind th
gladsome and full of acclaim to s

"For time is like a fashionable l
That lightly shakes the partin
And with his arms outstretche
Greete the new comer."

James is coming—

A new king is coming—a yoc
old woman is to reign over us.

It is sufficient that he is new

The narrow-minded, pedantic, precise, learned, selfish, vicious, weak old youth—for though young in years and wisdom, he is old in craft, he is like an old child—has in his miserable self-opinionated wisdom, bound himself by promises to all parties.

What matters good faith?—What matter pledges given and received?—To secure a crown!—A wise man well practised in kingcraft, will twist all these people round his little finger, to secure his crown!

The Catholics, the Puritans, the English church, all are glad and satisfied.

The church of England was the only member of the party who found reason to continue so. She had taken care to demonstrate to his kingship, that whatever his predilections might be, there was no security for his crown out of her pale.

The Catholics, however, had, as they thought, sure grounds to expect that their condition would be greatly alleviated: the time was arrived, the hour had struck, when such alleviation would have been both politic and safe. Attached to him for his mother's sake, there was a bond of affection and old reminiscence between them and their sovereign—an advantage, which had his predecessor possessed she would have found means to turn to good account.

They had, moreover, as he had led them to believe, his positive assurances that such should be his course of proceeding, and that their turn was coming at last.

Animated by such hopes nothing could exceed the joy and exultation with which they received the new monarch. It was an honest joy, and an exultation, but

They were permitted to a
healthful, happy feeling of
pride in their country : for
spared the harassing injur
selves virtually from the socie
and to carry their allegiance
They were no longer comm
hatred against their governm
and traitors in the bosoms of
once allowed to cherish the co
to the king.

Loyalty is the natural lean
however distorted and pervers
of their priests it may become.
of their warm and devoted fee
loyal allegiance to their hier
Woe to the false prophets t
them.

The merry bells are ringin
.....

They are all friends now.

Sir Thomas Tresham, released from prison, has proclaimed the king in Northamptonshire. The Catholic gentlemen in the several counties have come forward to tender their allegiance. All is harmony, hope, and joy.

Robert and a few others are still moody and distrustful: but Thomas Percy, who knows the king well, who has often visited him and been honoured with the most confidential communications, labours hard to reassure them.

END OF VOL. I.

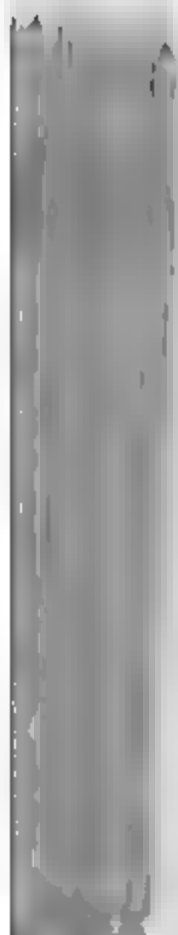
C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

“ What the loftinesse of the argument requireth, I confesse with sorrow I have not performed: yet have I willingly bestowed what pains I have been able. I have neither in other works, nor yet in this, in any sort satisfied myself. Neverthelesse, I shall hold myself recompensed to the full, if by my ready willingnesse to preserve the memory of things, to relate truths, and to train up men's minds to honesty and wisdom, I may find a place for a time, amongst the petty writers of great matters.”—*Camden, Introduction to the Annals.*

FATHER DARCY.

"What the loftiness of the sorrow I have not performed: y pains I have been able. I have x this, in any sort satisfied myself recompensed to the full, if by my memory of things, to relate truth honesty and wisdom, I may find petty writers of great matters."—

FATHER DARCY.



FATHER DARCY.

BY THE

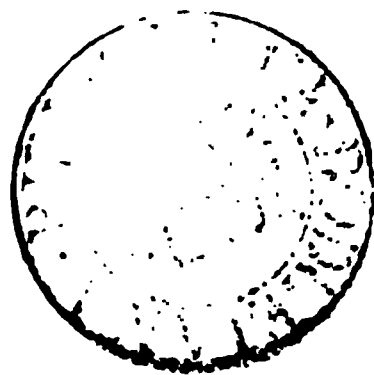
AUTHOR OF "MOUNT SOREL," AND THE "TWO OLD
MEN'S TALES."

"Oh Ballard, Ballard!—What hast thou done!—A sort of brave youths
otherwise endowed with good gifts, by thy inducement hast thou brought to
this utter destruction and confusion."

The Lord Chancellor Hallen's Address—State Tryals.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



LONDON:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 186, STRAND.

1846.

“What the loftiness of the argument
sorrow I have not performed: yet his
pains I have been able. I have neither
this, in any sort satisfied myself. Never
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memory of things, to relate truths, and
honesty and wisdom, I may find a plenty
petty writers of great matters.”—Cam

FATHER DARCY.

CHAPTER I.

“ I have read in the marvellous heart of man,
That strange and mystic scroll,
That an army of phantoms vast and wan
Beleaguer the human soul.”

Longfellow.

How beautiful were once the midland counties of England! They are beautiful still, in spite of the terrage for agricultural improvements, which, like so many other most excellent improvements, will end at I fear, in driving the lover of simplicity and nature high distracted.

How beautiful were those high wild hawthorn, maple, hazel hedges, with their shaws, and their wild trees, toppling fantastically round the rich pasture—one mass of flowers. How beautiful those long grasses—I suppose we ought to call them coarse—golden with king-cups, and gleaming with white purple orchises, cowslip, and feathered meadow; and those large hemlock kexes, as some call them, spreading their white umbels to the wind!

In many parts of the country these beauties have either disappeared. The hedges are trim and common—the fields are covered with fine well-weeded turf;

lived one, who had left her fifty years before, the happiest of both the happiest of young wives, living the kindest of husbands, at his family seat, or Stoke Dry, as it is now called, in Rutlandshire and Northamptonshire.

Journeying along the last-mentioned cultivated county—its fertile valleys, its steep hills crowned with long sweet woods, you arrive at last at a range of the majestic edifice of Rockingham, as it were, Rutlandshire; and look down upon a romantic county beneath you—valleys intersected by basins and valleys, small towns, surmounted by their little castles, mostly surrounded by trees, and green oases amid the bare green hills.

Upon a high hill opposite, as you pass the road which traverses the small

stood then; with its low hump backed cottages, built of clay, and held together by huge beams of native oak; clustered over with wild briar and honeysuckles; the little primitive gardens around laid out with "Cockle shells and muscle bells, and daisies all in a row."

Every thing about these little dwellings bespeaks the character of the times; imaginative, not luxurious; thrifty, industrious, persevering, and simple. The long reign of peace under which England has flourished, has diffused abundance and comfort among these little habitations.

Of the mansion of Dry Stoke, save a small portion of the stabling, scarcely a wreck remains.

Of the house, the fair proportions of which may be guessed at by the character of a few remaining fragments of walls, hardly one stone lies upon another; its gardens, its terraces, may be imagined rather than traced; the besom of destruction hath swept over what was once the abode of the brave and the good, and the wise; and dark traditions of desperate crime, and dreadful retribution, hang round its yet existing monuments.

In the little church hard by, may still be seen the magnificent tomb erected to the memory of the grandfather of Everard, who was the immediate successor. And in a little deserted chapel, all broken and defaced, a marble effigy, with a horrible tradition attached to it is said to be his own—but that is, I believe, a popular error. His dust is resting elsewhere. The handsome features and fine proportions which characterised the

underground passages, used for
the different houses of the Cath
the concealment of their priests:
cate with the mansion called the
distant, which is still in the poss
Catholic family of Nevil.

The large manorial pigeon-hou
the domain, was, some few years
and if we may believe the report
testified to the magnificence of the
belonged.

We must not, however, imagin
splendid as those of Goddeshurst
fortunes of this branch of the D
plentiful, were not magnificent.
the domain, however, was handson
sense of good order, dignity, an
seemed to attach as an hereditary
race.

his heart, the purity of his conduct, and his deep sense of religion, rendered him a mark for the love and veneration of all mankind.

His happy wife, thus writing to a beloved friend of her youth, describes life as it fled peacefully by at Dry Stoke.

“ It is a strange fantastic old hall, that in which we live; but it is full of charms for me. The house may be called modern in comparison to some we know, though ancient when contrasted with Goddeshurst. It is a quaint peaked sort of a thing, with such an innumerable quantity of windows of all shapes and sizes, that, when the sun glitters upon it, it looks like a coronet of jewels. It is rich and somewhat grave, but not gloomy, an amiable sort of looking home after all.

“ The interior is a complete wilderness; one ought to have it regularly *mapped*; I, for one, do not attempt to understand it; such intricate narrow passages, such little cells of rooms, with huge projecting chimneys, which perplex me beyond measure. Many of the rooms seem really half wall. People must have had a dreadful fear of being overheard when they erected such prodigious barriers between their apartments. These thick walls are the only things I really dislike about my new home; one hears such strange creeping noises, as it were, within them from time to time. I used to complain of these odd disquieting noises at Harroden Magna, and I remember that Grace Vaux always looked displeased

...my husband out, &
make me laugh at such thing
at the ancient pictures, and
of this palace of ours, till I
ancestors of Everard's were
ing behind the arras.

"It would be really fright
so evident a fancy of my o
seriously set myself down to
hear, but the wind swaying
a cuckoo calling, or a blackl
have only to open my windo
as cheerful as May-day. It
view, quite different from No
tiny miniature imitation of
little hills swelling around wit
nestling villages. Then the
different churches comes up sc
scene is so full of that rural
Sometimes I

heavy wain comes thundering down this hollow way through the village of Dry Stoke, then cocks are crowing, and dogs are yelping, and herds are lowing—it is so cheerful and so pretty!

“Oh! it's a lovely—lovely, happy world; and I, the happiest, and most blest of created beings within it; sent here, it would seem, by the great Creator, to be set forth as a type and example of his graciousness and his goodness; and think you not I am grateful? Do I not?—in truth I do—offer my heartfelt thanksgiving to him, the dread Almighty, and would fain enlist every holy saint in the calendar, and implore the virgin mother herself, to bear the incense of this grateful heart to his awful and mysterious throne.

“But, sweet Alice, I rave of all these outward things, and why do I not tell you of him, the lord and master of this foolish heart? the Adam of this earthly paradise—Adam, no—for he fell; say rather, the angel of this Heaven upon earth. My brave, my beautiful, my wise, my honoured husband! He is so beautiful that men forget to speak but of his beauty; he is so gentle, kind, and good, that hearts dwell only on his goodness; he is so brave, that one forgets every thing, but pride in that; he is so temperate and wise, that everybody seems to seek of him advice. And then he loves me! this man—this angel, loves his poor Evelyn to doting—to folly—ah! no, no, no—never will I give him cause to love his Evelyn so.

“He is, as I have told you, of a lofty presence, tall, and nobly formed, yet not awful looking; his hair is

of a beautiful brown; his large pure gray eye, deep and gleaming; his tone of voice is like music; every one reveres and honours him, yet no one seems afraid of him. As for me, I sit by his side his arm over my shoulder, and prattle to him by the hour; the talk, indeed, is all my own—a thing I fear we foolish women love too well; for his words are few, falling now and then like water drops, as if just to keep the clack of the wheel agoing; but then there is such gentle love in his eyes—Oh! I am only too exquisitely happy.

“I hope, I hope he is happy too; but he is of a more serious temper than I am, naturally thoughtful, perhaps somewhat of a melancholy turn—silent, reflecting, and tranquil; but when the talk turns on brave and generous deeds, on self-sacrifice or martyrdom, in the cause of the suffering and the oppressed—then, you should see his eye flash, and his cheek kindle; though he rarely even then says any thing; and perhaps these flashes of the spirit are only revealed to eyes observant as mine.

“Indeed, since we have been married, and things have gone on so much in many ways as my father and Mr. Warner would have desired, my Everard has seemed rather like one who has done with the perplexing business of this world, and who has taken up the part of quiet observer.

“Do you know, foolish that I am, there are moments when I could almost regret this. So great a favourite as he was with our poor old queen—and so well fitted as he is to adorn a court, and advise a government, I could

almost wish he would put himself forward before this new king, and assume the place that befits his genius.

“ But he only smiles in a sort of doubtful, half serious manner, when I say so; and bids me mind my nursery. We do not, indeed, often talk of those points which occupy the minds of so many. My lamented father and dear, good Mr. Warner—the peace of Heaven be with them both—brought me up to think in many things differently from most of my Catholic friends; and though Sir Everard agreed with them in much, yet there was always a reserved corner, as it may be said, in his mind. Some would not like this, but to me there appears a dignity in this reserve; and a mystery which adds a strange and deep interest to my passionate affection.

“ My father and Mr. Warner were both anxious at first, I know, with respect to Sir Everard's opinions; but the more they knew of him the more they loved him; and when, soon after our marriage, we together closed my honoured father's eyes, his last look, and his last breath were full of blessings upon us both, and of a calm satisfaction as to the hands into which he had committed his too tenderly prized daughter.

“ Sir Everard, I believe, views many things in a different light from that in which my father instructed me to regard them; but if it be so, he preserves a silence upon these matters. Perhaps he thinks it an honourable engagement to my father not to interfere with my ways of thinking in such things: however it may be, this corner of his heart and counsels is a sealed chamber

to his Evelyn; and Heaven forbids he should too curiously desire to pry into that which it is his wish to withhold.

“ We do not see much of company in this dear home of ours; Everard takes little part in the festivities and sports which interest all the young gentlemen around; much feasting, and above all drinking, are his abhorrence. A very few gentlemen, old friends of his, are the only people that visit us.

“ Of my own old friends, the beauteous Eleanor (of whom more anon) is very much with us; but Grace Vaux we seldom see. She has taken a part—a saintly, holy part—which all ought to reverence if they cannot imitate; and, disdaining the idle toys of life, and rejecting its sweetest and dearest enjoyments—alas! poor Grace—is devoted to the service of the suffering church. She and Mother Anne are seldom seen; their hours are employed in secret ministrations, the object of which I do not quite understand—but of which, all who do speak, speak with awe and reverence. As for Eleanor!—that is a piteous tale—I do not know what to say. It is not for me to judge—indeed, so closely does she shroud her heart in silence, that it is wrong perhaps to attempt it. There is one comes here—that dangerous, that strange, and fascinating man . . . The influence he exercises over all, is inexplicable—is frightful: he seems to bewitch every one who approaches him, but me. When he enters, first the colour flushes to her

very forehead, then it dies away till even her lips are white—nay blue.

“And yet, let him but go up to her; speak to her in that strange, interesting manner that he has—Oh, the dissembler!—the dignified, the noble dissembler!—No being upon earth but my watchful self, could discern what is passing within her heart. Soon he turns away, careless as one intent upon far deeper and more serious things; and she retreats to the window, where she sits in the deep recess, pretending to be busily employed on that cushion which she is working for me; but I can see her hands tremble, and sometimes almost could fancy I heard her heart beat.

“Alas, poor Eleanor!—what a wreck she has become.—She who used to be as blooming as a rose—is pale, and wan, and thin, and feeble; and then her brother’s tenderness—as he places her sick hand upon his arm, with—

“‘What ails my Eleanor—who vexes my sweet Eleanor?’

“And she who used to be so petulant you know at times, seems now all gentle sadness, and kisses his hand with a sweet humility, and bids him not heed her, for it is only her way—she cannot help it.

“In vain I try to win her to confession, that is the only thing that makes her angry—she vows, so solemnly, Alice—(if she be not sincere, it is sad to hear the young creature say it)—vows so solemnly that there is no cause for all this hidden sorrow—that I cannot, ought not I should say, to disbelieve her. She one day, by her vehement entreaties, wrung from me a promise that I would never mention my suspi-

alas! alas!—Let us say no more

“ I cannot think it right on Mr. Catesby as we should call more circumspect: he ought not so much, if he suspect—and can true state of things. I wish I bound to Mr. Catesby, and yet I—had I not my own secret I should find it impossible to hang round this strange, mysterious

“ Mr. Catesby is a very different Robert we used to meet at the Then, you recollect what a wild, person he was—extremely clever so violent! So young of his then—for he is really at least ten Everard—but Sir Everard was

in an abrupt, somewhat rough manner—still there is much character, so much plain manly strength in every thing he says, that, I believe for that reason, roughness seldom displeases. You recollect how much feeling there was at times in his face, even in the wild days. There is at times the same character of deep feeling still: though it is very seldom called forth. He loves Everard very much I believe, and Everard loves him, with all the love of a brother.

‘As for poor Eleanor . . . but I have said I will not do with that painful subject.

‘You know Francis Tresham of old. He is one who does much to this house—and the two Mr. Wrights, Plowlands, Mr. Winter, and Mr. Rookwood. These two last I like exceedingly. Mr. Winter is a very complete gentleman, much practised in the world’s affairs, and yet extremely simple and affectionate in manner: you could scarcely imagine he had ever been a courtier. Mr. Rookwood, too, is very much respected. But I do not like the two Mr. Wrights; there is something very coarse and vulgar in their countenances; and Christopher is such a huge, rough, disagreeable sort of a man!

‘However, altogether, with a few others, they make a very pleasant party. Sometimes one or two gentlemen, strangers to me, join us; they are assuredly men of exquisite address and manners, who have evidently seen a great deal of the world; and they seem so clever, and there is something so insinuating in their tone, that it is impossible not to feel flattered

by their attentions. Many of them speak with a slight foreign accent—I have my thoughts upon these subjects, but I keep them to myself; and did I not send this by a sure hand, and were not better times opening upon us—I would not venture to go thus far with you.

“It is remarkable, that distinguished as these gentlemen are by the sweetness of their manners, they have mostly such common names; none of them seem to be men of family; though there is one to whom all pay very great respect, I perceive. He is a very fair and handsome man, with a smooth and pleasant address, and pays most particular attention to me as mistress of the house. Whenever he is here, Eleanor seems to be happier, and a little better; and to rouse from her deep despondency; but then when he is gone, she is worse than ever. Almost all the gentlemen, and my husband among the rest, are in high spirits at the new prospect of things. King James is expected to cross the border to-morrow, and vast preparations are making wherever he is to pass by. The bells in the little churches around are ringing merrily: and there will be bonfires and pitch barrels upon all our Rutlandshire hills to-night.

“They talk openly now of religion, and of the holy sacrifice of the mass; and seem to think that the priest’s chamber over the porch of our little church will soon have a new inhabitant. In short, that those churches which belong, as this does, to the estate of a Catholic gentleman, and which have been erected by his own ancestors, shall be restored to the true faith.

“I know not how this may be—but this I know—my heart shall bless God when all is open and above-board, and there is an end to a sort of cloudy mystery that hangs over things, I can’t quite explain to myself here or how.”

“My sweet Alice—is it possible? Another anniversary of my wedding-day.

“What a happy year this has been; it has been like the restoration of poor pent up prisoners to light and air. It seems to me as if every bosom breathed more freely—every heart beat lighter.

“Those terribly oppressive fines which lay so heavily upon those whose consciences would not allow of attendance at the heretic worship, have been all remitted; mass is celebrated in the gentlemen’s houses—not altogether openly it is true, but still as it used to be at Goddeshurst, and as I have never till lately seen it here; without terror and precaution—but in confidence that it will be connived at.

“The anxious brow of my Everard seems to have resumed more than its first serenity. He is cheerful and satisfied—and we are *so* happy.

“I wish you could see your Evelyn sitting upon the old seat beneath the aged oak; her husband is sitting by her, his head bent down intent upon his book; at his feet sits a little cherub—our boy, such a lovely creature!—and Everard loves him so. However deep in thought, however occupied in study, he will have his little

Kenelm with him. The little fellow sits at his feet busy with his play; then gets up, and clasps his father's knees; his father looks down at him, then on the other baby in my lap, which turns his large blue eyes upon him; then he stoops down and kisses them both, presses my hand, smiles with his own sweet serious smile, and to his book once more.

“I had forgotten one in our family group—Everard's brother, John Digby. He is quite a youth, and but lately returned from the place, I know not exactly which, where he has been educated. John Digby is as remarkable as the rest of this noble family. He is not nearly so handsome as his brother, nor has he so sweet and tender an expression of countenance, nor so much elegance of form; but there is a plain and manly simplicity in his face and bearing, which pleases me exceedingly.

“I have observed one or two things.

“I don't think he seems to be such a favourite with those strangers I spoke of as the rest of them are. And I observe when they are here he is extremely reserved and silent; says scarcely a word, but seems to be very attentive to all that falls from them.

“I often catch him fixing his eye upon that gentleman I described to you particularly, and whom they call Mr. Darcy; and when the latter observes this, he will suddenly turn round and look at John Digby in a haughty manner that is quite remarkable; it seems to say, ‘How dare you presume to watch me?’ John Digby turns away; but his countenance does not

change as I observe some of the others do, when Mr. Darcy fixes that extraordinary blue eye of his upon them.

“As regards Mr. Catesby, there seems some feeling of the same sort. Mr Catesby, who is so adored and listened to by all the rest, does not seem to please John Digby; but it is true he seldom addresses or notices him—they rarely exchange a word together.

“Now, farewell sweetest Alice. My messenger is about to depart; rejoice with your Evelyn in the bright days which lie before us; rejoice for each family of this long divided land. We are now all once more to be united in union and peace, and the dissemblings and the dissensions, and the anxieties and the distrusts, are henceforward and for ever at an end.”

So fondly believed the gentle enthusiast—but, alas! how vain and futile were her dreams.

The passions and prejudices of men were not so easily to be allayed. That toleration for which she with the good and amiable among her party sighed, was denied by the fears and the prejudices of a rival church. But even had it been granted under the evil influences which then prevailed among the Catholics in England, it would have been powerless for the establishment of peace.

The Jesuits and the priests from the continental seminaries, with the principal among the Catholic young men who, having there been educated, had im-

bibed the like dangerous maxims, looked to nothing less than an absolute supremacy for their church; and cherished the expectation, not only to be allowed the free exercise of their religion, but to triumph and to persecute in their turn.

The fierce spirit of their religion was as yet little softened; and their ideas on the subject of liberty of conscience, as little enlarged. To recover the sceptre of England, and to repeat the Marian persecution, was the secret aim and hope of a great number of Catholic gentlemen, and of almost the whole body of the priests.

Such views on their side justify in some degree the jealousy of the English church, and their policy with regard to their new monarch; but nothing can justify the odious, deceitful double-dealing of the king himself. His conduct excites detestation as unmixed as that of the designing and cold-blooded priests.

We are now going to leave Dry Stoke, the peaceful abode of domestic love and happiness, as displayed by the artless pen of its good and innocent mistress, and change to a very different scene. I am going to introduce you to Ashby St. Legers, the abode of Mr. Cateby, whom you have already no doubt recognised as the Robert of the former portion of this story.

King James has been in England not quite a year; and certain rumours have been gathering with regard to a change of measures speedily to be expected.

The Catholics, awakening from their security, begin to look around with apprehension upon what is coming next. While the bigots of the other party, for in all

religious dissensions there are bigots upon every side, are rousing themselves from their state of inactivity, and preparing for fresh persecutions, delations, and violences.

There is a house in Northamptonshire still existing, and externally very much in the same state, probably, as when it was inhabited by those I am about to describe.

It is situated in the neighbourhood of a small village, and surrounded by well-wooded hills and pleasant little dales, but the house itself has an aspect somewhat sinister and mournful; at least so it seemed to me when I visited it. The gardens, which are upon a perfect flat, and which still retain vestiges of their ancient walks and terraces, and the large fish-ponds and stews, lying in a meadow below, are all heavily overhung with trees; and the old ruinous gatehouse in black and white wood, the little ancient church, where the brass monument of the Catesby of Richard III.'s time is still in existence, all carried to my imagination a something sorrowful and gloomy; perhaps the result of those associations with which my thoughts peopled a place, which by the politeness of the present inhabitant I was allowed to visit.

The house itself appears to be of the same date with many of the other handsome houses built by the Catholic gentry, namely, about the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign. It is handsome though not very large, irregular in its shape, and adorned with those beautiful oriel windows and ornamented chimneys, which render the architecture of that period so rich and picturesque. But the rooms are

more gentleman built at that time

The arms of the Catesby family
over the porch and over the chimney

The crest a falcon, and the motto
almost be thought prophetic of the
of this ancient and renowned family

The hall is wainscotted with designs
which are filled with rude sketches
drawn in a sort of terra sienna colour
very lugubrious character.

Altogether, few things can be more
and oppressive than was the appearance
Legers in February of the year 1666

The evening was dark and storm
in loud blasts through the ancient trees
heavy masses over the garden; the
and pattered heavily against the
and heavy stone mullioned windows
be seen setting behind the church, just
of golden light under the bell tower.

hung with very dark arras, against which, as if to add to its melancholy, were suspended several pictures in the very darkest Spanish manner, and in ebony frames: representing the tortures and martyrdoms of the various saints of the Roman calendar. There was a black cloth laid over the floor, in place of the carpets which were by this time becoming pretty nearly universal; and curtains of a purple, almost approaching to black, gave a sombre richness to the apartment. A fire of immense logs of wood was smouldering upon the hearth.

There were in the room a stern looking lady and two young children.

The lady was clothed in deep mourning, and her silver hair—silvered it would seem rather before its time—was gathered under a dark hood; her dress was severe in its extreme simplicity, yet the materials were extremely rich and handsome.

Her face had once been beautiful, in a grand and haughty style of beauty; her nose was prominent and well outlined, her brow broad and expansive, her eyes large and serious, her mouth rigid and firm, her chin, scarcely so well pronounced as the rest of her features, straight, but well formed; the expression of her countenance at once terrible and interesting. The traces of deep ineffaceable suffering and of anxious care, were there—which might have rendered it almost sublimely interesting, but for the stern endurance rather than patience, the deep resentment bitter and ineffaceable as had been the suffering, and the proud, haughty, un pitying expression to be read there.

Tall and rigid in her figure; her hands thin and de-

licate, veined and sinewed in large knots and tendons, were clothed with a sort of black velvet mitten, which displayed one large mourning ring upon the right hand, and a small one encircling the wedding finger on the left.

She was sitting in a large chair covered with black leather by the side of the window, reading, in a book bound, as such books then were, in black, richly ornamented with gold.

From time to time, the book, and the hand which held it, would sink into her lap—while her large melancholy eyes were fixed upon the dark heavy plumes of some immense and gloomy fir-trees, swaying and heaving in the wintry wind.

The two little children that were in the room with her were two little boys, her grandchildren. Their mother was dead; their father, the son of this lady—was Robert Catesby.

The little creatures looked pale, and their features were sharp and sickly; their large eyes were encircled with that dark black ring which is a symptom of early suffering and decay; they were not clothed in black as was the lady, but in little coats of dark maroon colour, ornamented with silken fringes; and their small open collars were of rich needle-work.

Their appearance was that of children carefully attended to : but their looks were dull and almost terrified. They sat crouching together in a corner of the room, near the fire-place, playing at some little quiet game they had found for themselves; whispering to each other when they spoke; and every now and then casting a

sort of fearful glance at the lady, and round the room, which was now being wrapped in the fast closing shadows of that dark and dismal evening.

The lady never turned her head to look at the children, nor did she call for lights; she sat, as was her custom, lost in her own melancholy and bitter reflections, watching the gathering shadows of the night that was stealing on.

She was a Throckmorton by birth: two near relations had been hers—loved and venerated with all that force of affection which belongs to ardent temperaments—the feelings strengthened by solitude, and excited by the deep mysteries of religion.

Where were these loved ones now?

They did not even slumber in a hallowed grave. Their severed heads, and mangled limbs, were yet blackening in the winter's rain and wind, upon the battlements of the bridge of London.

Lingering imprisonment—a death under the horrid sentence for treason—had been theirs.

And for what?

For rebellion—as that heretical government, administered by a miserable, a godless usurper had styled it: for glorious martyrdom, to the only true church of Christ—as she esteemed it.

Never since that fatal day, though years and years had since rolled by, had the rain pelted or the wild winter's wind howled round her roof, but that lady had thought of those poor bodies of clay refused a shelter in the earth's kind bosom. It was a strange perversion of feeling, but so it was. She shuddered

for them, as if still sensible to disgrace and suffering; and her never dying and bitter resentment, was fed by the presence of the miserable recollections thus presented to her mind.

Her husband, too! Sir William Catesby!—what an existence had been his!—what years of imprisonment in dark unwholesome prisons, exhausted by disease, wretchedness, and misery! What years had been hers!—devoted as she was to that faith to which she clung with a vehemence and tenacity only increased by what she had suffered in its cause. She had lived oppressed and impoverished, under the power of those whom she had been taught to look upon, and did look upon, as themselves only worthy of the torturing fire and stake upon earth, and of the everlasting fires hereafter. Every day brought its fresh source of sorrow and irritation, to a mind neither chastened nor softened by sorrow—alas! in what a different school from that of the man of sorrows had she been reared!—every additional suffering only gave fresh force to that deep, that intense, that unmitigated thirst for retribution, call it revenge rather, which agitated her bosom.

Her son, too, had disappointed her.

Vehement, passionate, desperate, determined, as was Robert's character, he had not appeared to sympathise in his mother's feelings. The early years of his life had been passed in what appeared to be an utter indifference to all religion, and as an outwardly conforming Protestant.

The wild sports and extravagant excitements of *that* still semi-barbarous age, seemed to occupy him *entirely*.

The mother's tears, remonstrances, and reproaches had alike been unavailing. He was reckless and daring, and there was a frank defiance of the opinion of others in his disposition, which had early emancipated him from all domestic control.

He ran his wild career, beloved, admired, and even honoured by all his companions, for he had a high and generous heart. His sword was ever ready at a friend's service—his purse was at every one's command.

His eloquent tongue was prompt to resist oppression, and assert what he thought the right. The influence he exercised over those around him, amounted to a species of fascination. He was adored by his intimates: and few among them but would have been ready to lay down their lives in his behalf.

Such gifts, had they but been tempered and disciplined by right principles of action, what might they not have effected! Alas! how different had been his teaching! Of the reformed religion, though brought up in outward conformity to it—as had been so many of his day, and his father before him—he had, in fact, learned nothing. It had proved but a species of atheism, as far as regarded himself; and as such he was easily taught to esteem it with respect to others; looking upon its professors as, at best, but a set of heartless unbelievers, such as he himself had at one time been. But his soul was not of a nature thus to be satisfied; he longed for spiritual food: it was the passionate want of the spirit in his day. Mistaken religion it might be, but religion was still the leading interest of men's lives. After the first effervescence of youth was over, Robert Catesby

had awakened to this want, this yearning, this hunger and this thirst of the spirit—at first roused, it is true, by the voice of that beauteous saint whom he adored—and under a sense of his miserable deficiency, he had sought Mr. Darcy, and from his lips imbibed—what should have been the word of salvation, and the fountain of living waters to his perishing soul. Unhappy man!

He was reconciled to his religion, and had imbibed all the false, casuistical, cruel, revengeful maxims, which under that name of infinite power, had corrupted and vitiated so many lives. And yet, even yet—the mother was disappointed.

Though he had engaged in the conspiracy with Essex, yet he had, during the last years of the old queen, refused to lend his aid to any fresh plan of violence; and, busied in the secret intrigues to which allusion has been made, his confidence had been bestowed on one only; and lately he had, following the injunctions of his ghostly advisers, awaited in patience the accession of the man from whose secret inclinations such vast hopes were entertained.

Toleration—remission of the penal acts and of the fines for recusancy—had been tacitly promised; and larger indulgences, if not the restoration of their religion to the ascendancy, implied. The exact extent to which the expectations of the Jesuits were carried is doubtful; and it remains impossible now to decide how far they were misled by the royal dissembler—or what grounds they really had for believing that James, like so many of his descendants, was in secret attached to the Roman religion.

However that may be, one thing is certain, that for the last two years of the old queen's reign, and the first of that of James, the Catholics remained comparatively quiet. And those who had suffered in their purses, or far more severely in their dearest affections, under the late government, awaited in a sort of gloomy patience, till the miserable woman, and cruel usurper and persecutor as they deemed her, died quietly in her bed; and they were baulked of what they thought their just revenge.

Lady Catesby had felt this bitterly: her religious principles had taught her to cherish, not to discipline such sentiments. She indulged them with all that pride of self-esteem which her mistaken views tended to cherish.

The two little children who were now sitting in this gloomy room with her, were those of Robert by his early marriage: a union entirely formed upon motives of family arrangement, and soon terminated by death. The children had remained in the care of the grandmother, and the heart of Robert devoted itself to Grace Vaux.

The lady sits there at the window, watching the heavy clouds rolling over the now darkening sky; the night closes in, the wind again rises in its fury, and roars round the house in the large open chimney; the rain again falls in torrents as if the heavens were opened for another deluge; the poor little boys creep and cower together; the lady, stern and melancholy, heeds them not.

An ancient gray-headed serving-man, walking with a slow and cautious step, now half opens the door, and looks in. Not a word is exchanged on either side, but the lady responds to his mute questioning with a glance—he retreats, goes outside the house, fixes the heavy shutters, and bars them. The noise of closing windows and doors, chains, bolts, and heavy bars of iron falling, is heard through the house.

Then he enters again.

“All is safe, madam, for to-night. I have sent Richard with the great ban dog to make his rounds. Shall I bring the lamp, and summon you when all is ready?”

“Do so—set the lamp down there.”

The small lamp casts a feeble light on that side of the gloomy chamber, and falls full upon one picture, a horrible one, of a martyrdom of St. Bartholomew. The poor little children, to whom that picture is almost like a dreadful reality, look up at it with eyes terrified but tearless, and then glance at the pale, awful face of their grandmother, which is to them almost equally terrific: from time to time they cast fearful glances into the corners of the apartment, shrouded to them in what seems an infinite darkness. They have done their little quiet play; they sit there motionless. But when a loud sweep of the wind batters at the windows, and roars down the chimney, then they start, crouch together, and shudder.

“Come here, both of you,” says the lady, in a deep, awful voice.

They came creeping to her, and stood one on each side of her knee.

"You know," she says, looking at them in a stern, menacing manner, "what is the punishment of those who tell secrets? They go into a dark, dismal, black pit at the bottom of which are seething flames rising and falling; and black devils with great wings and talons of iron are sailing up and down in the air; and they seize the souls of wicked children who have told secrets, and they plunge them down that black pit straight into the fire. Do you know the heat of fire?" and seizing each little trembling hand, she held them to the fire till the children flinched, but they did not move or cry out.

As soon as the pain was acute enough to make an impression, she took them away, and sitting down in her chair, each hand in hers, said:

"You are going with me to-night for the first time, to perform the holy service of the blessed Virgin;—the blessed Virgin who loves little children if they are secret and good, and sends a beautiful guardian angel with golden wings to take care of them."

The poor little children's countenances brightened a little at this.

"But if," in an awful tone, "they are bad, and tell secrets, she sends a great black devil to sit upon their heads, and glare at them with his fiery eyes."

"We won't tell: indeed we won't tell nothing," said the poor little ones, shuddering and shaking.

"Suppose somebody asks you what you did to-night?"

"What must I say?"

"You must say—'I played with brother, and then I

went to bed,'—and if they say, 'Did you do anything else?' you must say, 'Nothing else,' boldly, in a loud voice—and to yourself you must say 'but go with granddam'—because nobody has a right to ask you but granddam what you do: and so you are not to answer them in any other way. Do you understand, you little fool?" said she harshly to the younger one, who was gaping and staring with all his eyes. "You must say as brother says."

"Say as brother says," repeated the little innocent, quite bewildered;—but the elder one understood his grandmother perfectly well.

And he said,

"Yes, granddam: and then that great black devil shan't get at us—"

"Not if you do as I bid you."

"That I will, granddam—"

"Then there's a brave boy: and here's a picture book for you—but you're only to have it now and then—I must keep it: for if the king should find out you'd got it, he'd hang you upon his great black gallows: but you may look at it now—there—there's a picture of that wicked queen, all in flames and screeching out for a drop of water to cool her tongue—but she'll never have one single drop for ever, and ever, and ever. Wouldn't it be better to have your head cut off and be a good boy, than to be like that wicked queen?"

"Wicked queen!" said the little one—"look, brother, at her ugly face, how funny she looks, ha, ha—"

"Ha, ha," responded the other child.

"There's another. Who's this gruff-looking fat man,

ldam, that the devils are pulling and hauling
;?"

He's a dreadful wicked heretic, and his name's
in Luther,—you'll hear more of him when you are
. See, he doesn't like to go—they're pulling him
the fire—"

Oh how he kicks and jumps about—they'll never
him into the fire, I'm afraid. Oh! I'm afraid
ll never get him in—all heretics must be burned,
n't they, granddam?—Did they ever get him in,
ldam?"

ie little one was turning over the pages—he gave
eam of joy—" Oh! there's one in; look, brother."
ie door opened again—

All is ready," said the serving-man.

That will do;" and the lady, closing the book, said,
you are very good and quiet and stand stock still,
e the very, very good gentleman you are going to
s talking, then you shall see some more pretty pic-
s to-morrow."

o saying, and opening a secret drawer, disposed in
window-sill so as to escape observation, she depo-
the book of pictures there; then she took up her
iary, placed it in a small pouch depending to her
le, and taking a child in each hand, left the
1.

CHAPTER II.

- My hopes all flat, nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself;
My race of glory run, a race of shame
And I shall shortly be with them at rest."

Milton.

THEY crossed the low and irregularly shaped hall, dimly lighted by the lamp held by the old serving-man; on one side of it were two very heavy low-arched iron doors, which opened upon steps leading to the vaults beneath.

As the black depth yawned before their eyes, the poor children, relapsing into all their terrors, shrank and held back; but the lady, grasping their little hands as if in an iron vice, led them forward. Then giving the hand of the youngest to the old man, and still retaining the other in her grasp, she descended into the gloomy cavity below. One small wax candle was burning before another low door, which, opening slowly, displayed a large cellar, perfectly dark, except at the further end, where was raised a temporary altar upon which six wax candles were burning. The desecrated crucifix—that pathetic emblem of the faith of every Christian man, which priestly barbarity has rendered almost the revolting type of cruelty—stood in the centre of the altar; an image of the virgin in silver below, and a few small vases filled with everlasting flowers on each side; these were the sole ornaments.

No priest as yet appeared; but the old serving-man,

inquishing the hand of the little boy, who crept fearfully up to his grandmother and laid hold of her gown, prepared to serve the mass, as it is called. Every part of the large cellar, except what was just within the verge of the illumination from the altar, was in pitchy darkness; but in the doubtful twilight which skirted this darkness, figures of men and women might be dimly discerned, glaring like shades in the obscurity; which, however, was such, that it was impossible for any one to recognise another. The lady with the two children advanced at once into the broad light in front of the altar; she was the only person present, save the old servant, and it could possibly have been denounced by a secret enemy, had such been present.

The blood of the Throckmorton ever despised danger. The lady scorned to appear to seek darkness herself, though the security of others compelled her to adopt such means of celebrating the ceremonies of her faith.

It was a scene for a Rembrandt.

The broad light of the holy candles fell upon the crucifix, the flowers, the silver image, and the velvet bound missal book, all crossed and garlanded with gold; upon the rich carpet of crimson, blue, and gold, which covered the two small steps which led to the altar; upon the bending figure of the gray-haired attendant, now clad in the Levite's black dress; upon the tall dark lady, with her black hood, silver hair, and large sparkling jewels; and upon the sweet faces, shining curls, white hands, and gold and maroon dresses of the two little girls, who, pressing up against her black velvet gown,

cast their bright blue eyes with mingled terror and curiosity around them.

There was a pause of a few moments.

Then—as if arisen from the earth, coming no one knew from whence—the priest, in his rich dress of scarlet and gold, suddenly appeared on the steps of the altar; the voice of the droning serpent was heard issuing from the darkness behind; and the mass was sung.

The service over; there was a sort of hustled rush of garments, as of spirits sweeping by in the night wind; the priest disappeared from before the altar in the same mysterious manner in which he had entered; another man dressed in black, the performer on the serpent probably, came forward, and every candle but one was immediately extinguished.

The carpet on the steps was folded, the altar cleared of its ornaments, every vestige of the ceremony disappearing with the most astonishing celerity; at last the altar itself receded, and seemed to vanish into space; the steps were taken up, and nothing but the one candle remained, of what had seemed to the senses of the astonished children more like the pageant of a dream, than a substantial reality.

Their eyes were fixed upon the candle while their little hearts beat fast with terror, panting with anxiety to leave this den of darkness; but they dared not utter a word; at last, after a few minutes had elapsed, a fresh apparition presented itself—a fair and handsome gentleman dressed in a riding dress of murrey velvet, with

high boots, and a high hat, the band of which was fastened by a rich clasp of jewels, and ornamented with a black feather, appeared standing upon the side of the lady, and with an air of the most insinuating respect offering her his arm. She accepted it without hesitation; he took the hand of one little child, she of the other; lighted by the serving-man, they again traversed the vault, ascended the stairs, and entered the hall.

The children were here dismissed, and, attended by an aged attendant, almost as terrible a looking person as the lady herself, were carried off to darkness and their little beds,—to lie, their hearts palpitating with fear, their limbs bathed in a cold sweat, in all the agony of terrified childhood, the dreadful denunciations of their grandmother ringing in their ears, and the sketches she had represented, dancing before their eyes: while the lady and gentleman entered a small room very differently appointed from the one she had been sitting in before.

A large wood fire of cedar logs, then considered as the greatest of luxuries, was blazing in the open chimney; several sconces filled with wax candles burning on all sides, filled the room with a beautiful white light, under the influence of which, the rich hangings displayed their deep-toned colours to the greatest advantage. A small sideboard of chased silver and gold plate stood on one side; a small table covered with a napkin of the most delicate whiteness, in the centre; a plate of silver and one cover was laid upon it, and in the middle of the table, as if preparatory to the coming

ning once or twice shot throu
hall, and the thunder clattered re

It was a night to enjoy the c
rity, though the tranquillity w
experienced, was already some
obscure rumours that were afloat
as this, most assuredly no one w

The gentleman cast a glance c
tion round the apartment, and
the fire, took off his hat, and
covered with fine brown curls, s
and remarkable blue eye of M
alias Whalley, *alias* Garnet.

He sat down in the chair p
without waiting for an invitati
with an air of reverence and
strangely with her usual high ar
seemed to await his pleasure :
belonging to a separate rank in

lms, than a poor, hard-taxed labourer in the church's isolated vineyard, like myself."

"My poor endeavours," said the lady, "are only such it is my duty to offer, when he, who perils life in the y cause, deigns to honour my poor house with his ured presence. Oh sir! it has been but seldom that, oured by the warring elements, and under the curtain the pitchy night, you have been suffered to wet your s with the waters of refreshment. Such I humbly w offer, for you to snatch at, in this short interval of nger and of toil."

The speech seemed rather long and formal to Mr. rcy, who, to own the truth, having ridden many miles at bad day, was exceedingly hungry, and most impatient for his supper—the opportunities for ease and enment such as this, were certainly few in the life to ick he had devoted himself; and interruptions which ght drive him to his cold, narrow, and inconvenient ret chamber, might arrive at any moment. He was ite prepared to snatch the pleasures of life when they esented themselves, though to do him justice, not ring of himself when called upon to endure its ferings or its labours. The various disguises which had found it prudent to affect, and the relaxation of discipline necessary to maintain such disguises, had a od deal secularised his feelings; and like a man somewhat more politic than devout, he considered it wise to sband his strength and spirits by taking advantage of ery comfort and luxury which opportunity might ent, leaving the self-denying and ascetic course for

known to your kindness as
likewise; but shall be equally .
brose, if he will please to let me
for I own to the hunger of a wi

The lady took the hint, she
hastened the preparations of her

The Jesuit stretched himself
his white hands; and inhaled
rapture of epicurean delight at
blazing hearth, after a day such

The lady speedily returned,
man; a small supper consisting
as most delicate—and they were
of day—was laid upon the table
according to the fashion of the time.
Yet, even her smile of welcome
ful in it: pain mingled with ease
or did. When her guest was
seated in the arm-chair, opposite to

“THE END OF THE WORLD”

"I have supped," said the lady, "your reverence will excuse me. The bread on which my life is supported is not mine. None of my friends will press me unnecessarily to take of it."

"Still upon the same theme," said he, compassionately, "let the dead sleep, dear lady. 'The grave has received its own, and better days may be approaching.' 'The grave is hungry,' said she, 'it hath not received its own. It yawns and gapes—the ravenous maw of the sepulchre opens in vain. *They* have no grave. O holy earth, hath never received their ashes; they leaching in the wind—the earth cries out for vengeance of the blood which she hath opened her mouth to receive; but there is no vengeance.'"

"Lady," he said, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church; they shall have better than vengeance—they shall have glory. Their blood hath watered the earth, and the earth shall reap; be comforted, lady," he added in Latin the 37th Psalm: "Wicked doers shall be rooted out, and they that patiently abide the Lord, they shall possess the land."

"That bad woman died in her bed," she answered sadly, "and the excellent and beautiful of the earth were mangled upon the cruel scaffold. Their spirits seem to call upon me, they seem to haunt my footsteps, saying, 'How long Lord, how long!' While she lived," added she, "there was a hope her blood might atone for her cruelties; but she has died in her bed, and here ends retribution."

"And how did she die?" asked he, ministering to, instead of correcting—oh false and blind leader of the

ing for a successor: her most
grave before her: the blood of
from the scaffold. 'Justus es
ous judge, strong and patient
ments of death, he sendeth for
persecutors.' Be comforted, he
laid his hand upon her. What
have been in the comparison?
wheel," with a dreadful sort of
is the boon of mercy."

She looked somewhat

He took a glass of wine, lifted
off, and then changing the subject

"I was somewhat surprised
children intrusted with the secret
would be loath to question you
exactly according to your usual

"Depend upon it," said she
dare to utter a word—I have 1

ference of their manhood. Father, let them be reared in the sacred practices of their religion: their infant minds be filled with her terrors, and led with her glories. Oh! had his Father,—had I so with Robert!

he went on:

You, holy father, also understand so well the thing of youth—you know the necessity of early acts of submission and piety. These little ones shall be in their religion as their mother's milk: and learn to perish they must—to perish on the scaffold like the brave and the good before them: but *never* to disobey their teacher."

You think so?"

Only try them, father—try them in every way you can devise, and see whether even you—wise, able, experienced in the human heart, as you are—can draw a syllable from their lips beyond that which I have permitted them to utter."

"I will try," said he, as if satisfied with the idea,—I will prove them—if they fail, one sharp punishment, and to refrain from further confidences, will suffice."

"They will not fail, and I shall have the satisfaction of rearing *them*, at least, in those practices I most desire. Some time may come, you would have me hope, when these concealments will be at an end; and the church, restored triumphant, will open wide her everlasting gates, and receive her children; then shall these little ones walk with me, before the face of day, in the path which I have chosen for them. But enough of them.

May I crave your indulgence whilst I ask, what news? for little reaches my secluded hermitage, and yet my heart is wearying for intelligence."

"My informations have been for some weeks suspended, many occasions having led me to the north: the ways have been obstructed by the late snows: no intelligences from the great city have as yet reached me: but I go to Harroden as to-morrow, and shall there learn how matters stand."

His brow was contracted with a certain anxiety, as he kept repeating, "It is impossible to say—that king is after all a poor, weak, conceited puppet—and can faith be reposed in these fair hopes? Besides I cannot gather there was any absolute promise—which is a pity; for they say he is one who holds by the fond superstition of a promise," with a sort of equivocal smile, "yet, I cannot learn that he actually gave one. But we must have patience and watch the bearings of the times; something we may hope *must* be done. He would scarcely dare—his ministers would scarcely dare, to add the exasperation arising from hope and good faith betrayed, to that accumulation of wrongs with which we have at times been rendered—almost—as those who have been drunk with much wine—

"Yes," said he, taking up the fire tongs, and moving the logs so as to increase the bright and beautiful blaze, which gave to him, after his cold wanderings of that day, a most exquisite sense of comfort; still speaking as it were half in soliloquy to himself,

"Yes, *that* is a secret, which, with all their political

craft, they have yet to learn—the power that lies hidden in that very cup of bitterness which they have mingled for us—that is *our* secret. They think the draught they administer is a poison unto death—they know not that it hath a faculty to excite the brain to frenzy.

“But,” turning to the lady, who looked much excited, and whose eyes gleamed with a terrible inner fire—“patience—patience—it is the part of the church to endure—and of her children to make their toilsome pilgrimage over the rough stones and brambles of this mortal life, in silent submission to evils not without violence to be removed.”

The lady seemed stung to the quick at this speech; the mention of patience and submission to injuries, excited her to the last degree; she with difficulty abstained from a reply. The profound reverence with which she regarded her guest, prevented such an indulgence. To have given vent to her feelings in words, might have tended to soften their intensity; this relief denied, they seemed only the more deeply concentrated.

That was one other of these pregnant secrets possessed by the Jesuit. Lord Bacon has told us of the perilous effects of sadness not communicated; the master in human nature now before us, understood as well the terrible force of rage and hatred repressed, but not corrected. “We shall get something,” he said, with a gentle suavity, which excited in his hearer something of the feelings of the she-tiger, when she flings herself against the bars of her cage, lashing her tail with impotent rage; “and with that we must learn to be content. The fines for recusancy which pressed so

long as the flock is spared, he be done." And he bent his devoutly crossed himself.

The lady looked at him with admiration, but the hot colour was on her cheek.

"And vengeance . . ." said she.

"Leave that to the higher power—vengeance shall swiftly pursue shall be turned into hell, and I forget God. Upon the ungodly he and brimstone, storm and tempest portion to drink.' "

"But when?" casting up her eye—
"how long shall his vengeance

"We do not know—we cannot in this world—but if not in this, next, swift destruction shall assuredly

With such consolation she was of

bigotted, and tiresome old woman. For be it well
known, that though it was Mr. Darcy's vocation in
to provide the souls of others with a proper portion
of religion and fanaticism in matters connected with
it, yet he most carefully, in this instance, practised
reserve and caution to which he laid claim in others,
deprived from tasting of the exciting potion

upper things had been cleared away speedily;
there was always a certain dread of surprises, and
appearance of preparation for a solitary guest was
not to create suspicion, and give rise to disagreeable
speculations as to whom that guest might chance to be;
the hour was early, and the pair still continued
by the fire; the increasing violence of the storm
giving to the father a feeling of security from
the storm, for this one night at least, which was exces-
sively delightful. The weather indeed was so bad, that
he was to indulge the idea of enjoying a comfortable
rest in one of the guest chambers, instead of
going to his narrow and miserable truckle bed in
his and inconvenient priest's hiding-place.

There was a blast like that of a tornado, which swept
the house, and roared with inexpressible fury
the branches of the huge pine and oak trees of
the garden. With that came a pelt of rain as if it would
beat the windows in.

The father listened with satisfaction to the wild

uproar of the elements, and gently rubbing his hands, said:

"I crave your pardon, my honoured hostess, but I will take leave just to hint, that a bed in the eastern guest chamber might be ventured upon, perchance if"

"Hark," said she, starting, "what is that I hear—"

He lifted up his head, and listened anxiously.

The blast swept again, surging loud and vehement as the roaring sea past the clattering windows, but amid the tumult, the voice of the large ban-dog, uttering short watchful barks as if disturbed and restless, might be faintly heard.

"What is that?—do you hear it?"

The lady turned paler than ever, and rose hurriedly from her chair.

The priest remained seated, still listening anxiously.

Again the furious blast shook the windows, but as it subsided, the sound of distant horsemen might be heard, and the ban-dog burst at once into a loud passionate bark.

"Even on a night like this," cried she piteously, clasping her hands. "Oh! when are these persecutions to cease? Even on a night like this, may we not rest secure from the spoiler? Even this one night," looking at the priest, "may not that reverend head be allowed repose?"

The galloping of horses was now distinctly heard, and the huge bell over the porch rang violently.

"Oh they come! they come," cried the lady, trem-

ing excessively, in spite of her known firmness and courage. "Escape while there is time, this way; this way the panel opens. The passage leads to the small summer-house at the end of the garden, by that to the ells; here is the key, lock it behind you when you have passed through. Oh woe is me! woe is me! that I am not allowed to offer shelter to that sacred head even for this pitiless night."

The bell again rang passionately, violently, while the priest swept hurriedly by; but the bark of the ban-dog had ceased.

"List," said the priest, "the dog has ceased to bark, he knows these comers, they are no strangers."

"Oh trust it not, trust it not; escape and spare thy precious, precious life. Hark, they are unbarring the door. Escape! escape! escape! they cross the hall—I hear the footsteps of men. Oh Holy Virgin! it is too late!"—the door opened.

"It is my son!"

He came in, wrapped in his dark heavy riding cloak; his hat, in which was a jewel of great value, flapped over his face. He threw off his dripping cloak hastily, and flung it to the serving-man, displaying his rich dress beneath; he then went up to his mother, saluted her, and turning round, beheld Mr. Darcy; he advanced, took his hand, pressed it, and said:

"I expected to find you here."

He was greatly, greatly altered in the course of these last three years; his fine expression of generous energy,

though somewhat too wild and reckless, it is true, had been exchanged for a strange and sinister expression, which it was difficult exactly to comprehend. Force—indomitable force was characterised in every feature; but the eye that flashed so wildly and so beautifully, had assumed a dark and gloomy expression; the brow was cloudy, and the cheek pale. Great masses of hair hung round his head; cut, however, short, where they touched the collar; and the lower part of his face was entirely enveloped in his thick and neglected beard. His dress was as usual, extremely rich and handsome; though not fantastically cut and trimmed, as was that of most of the gallants of his time.

The evil influences of those false principles of religion and morals, which he had imbibed, with all the ardour of his vehement, not to say desperate temper, were never more signally displayed than in the case of this unfortunate man.

Resolute and determined as he was—by temper, a daring despiser of the ordinary maxims which held in check the men of his age, as far as civil society was concerned—yet, did he possess a heart capable of all the warmest and tenderest affections, and a conscience feelingly alive to the suggestions of duty. The anxiety with which it is known that he consulted his spiritual advisers as to the justice of the steps he afterwards pursued; and the wicked policy with which they tampered with, and misled that inquiring conscience; rest upon evidence it is impossible to refute.

His love, too, for Grace Vaux!—that tender and gentle influence of natural affection which, if it had

en suffered to take its free course, might have harmonised all the jarring elements within—how fatally, under the management of these designing men, had it acted on his character.

Disappointed in his best affections—the tie which bound this violent and energetic character to the humanities of life, ruptured in the most cruel manner—he had become what the Father Darcy had calculated that he would become. Heart-sore, heart-hardened, Robert Catesby had flung himself headlong into the vortex of political and religious strife and intrigue which was then raging, and the dark waters had submerged him.

Catesby had not shared in the hopes which had for the present tranquilised the majority of the Catholics; he had always distrusted the good faith of the king; he had always anticipated, in spite of the expectations held out by James, and in all probability by Robert Cecil, what the very reply on record of Bancroft, then Archbishop of Canterbury, to the Catholic petitioners implied: That the idea of toleration being extended to the Catholics had only been entertained by the government, under the apprehension that it might prove too weak to maintain itself without their co-operation.

The claim of the infant, supported by so powerful a ally, was a difficulty of considerable importance, to obviate which was the principal motive for the king's duplicity. But all danger upon this head being done away with by the treaty with Spain, which was at length brought to a conclusion, the king found himself at liberty to sacrifice their interests, which he appears to

have done without remorse, to the jealousies of the Puritans and high church party in England.

What a spectacle is here!—What a mystery of iniquity!

A faithless king—a lying government—and, opposed to them, a duped and desperate party and priesthood, carrying on under the cloak of religion, a system of hidden revolt, maintained by equivocations, falsehood, casuistry, and crime.

Oh, glorious truth!—light of the world—sanctuary of virtue—pure fountain of spiritual life—guide of the human footsteps—strength of the human heart—sacred candlestick in the temple of God—where wert thou then to be found?

The candle was extinguished, the light of gospel truth obscured, and men were wandering darkling and confused in that labyrinth of error into which their faithless shepherds had conducted them.

Let one short reflection be permitted here, upon the subject of persecution: with the practice of which those of the reformed religion (though in a greatly modified degree), have, by the Roman Catholics, been, alas! too justly charged.

We must not forget that the sixteenth century was the offspring of the centuries before; and that the sins and errors which stained the Reformation, must justly be attributed to the false bias on the subject of the rights of conscience, which centuries of misrule and false teaching on the part of the Catholic Church had engrafted into the minds of men.

The Catholic Church, which exclaims so loudly against the persecution with which she was visited,

as herself drunk with the blood of the saints—she had ever taught, and she still continued to teach, doctrines the most exclusive; and to sanction them by the practice of barbarities at which the heart recoils; and, while the reformers were struggling for existence, this error in principle was not altogether exploded. Nay it altogether yet exploded, in spite of the efforts of the wise and good ever since?

But let not the Catholics complain: so long as this principle of exclusion is maintained in its full force by themselves, they have no right to murmur if the tolerance of mankind hesitates to extend to them a freedom, which, once restored to the ascendant, they would be but too ready to deny to the rest of the world.

A victim to these exclusive principles, to these false views of Christian duty and Christian honour, now stands before us: an example held out in frightful notoriety to the shuddering ages.

Jealous, irritated, and impatient, he has ridden down from London with his usual desperate speed, to meet the priest whom he expected to find that evening at his house, in order that he might be the first to communicate the news with which his heart was burning.

The priest had risen, as I said, from his chair, and had exchanged a greeting; he now resumed his place, his eye fixed upon Catesby, with its usual expression of calm but penetrating observation, studying his countenance; much as a pilot questions the different lights

THE ADMIRABLE WOMAN, AND IN FURTHER EVIDENCE OF HIS DARING
DEEDS.

THE LADY JANE, about the same time of the
REMOVAL OF THE PRISONER IN HER COMPANION, observed
THE TWO MEN IN THE ROOM TO BE DISCUSSING WITH THE
WOMAN THE POINTS OF THE PRISONER'S DEFENCE SUFFICIENT
TO SHOW HER KNOWLEDGE. SHE WAS THERE AT THE TIME.

"I AM NOT SURE," SHE SAID, "AN ANSWER LOOK OUT
FOR THE PRISONER. BUT SHE MUST BE DOWN
IN THE PRISON."

THE PRISONER OF THE PRISON, WITHOUT SPEAKING, APPROACHED
THE TWO MEN, AND STOOD IN THE ROOM, WITH HIS BACK
TO THE PRISONER, AND HIS HANDS ON HIS BELT—

"I HAVE NEWS OF THE PRISONER."

"S. I AM SURE, MY SON, THE PRISONER IS DOWN
IN THE PRISON."

"WELL, MY SON, I AM SURE," ANSWERED CASSIDY, BITTERLY.

"THE PRISONER—IT IS THE PRISONER AS YOU SAY—
THE PRISONER, MY SON, WHATEVER YOUR NAME BE NOW—"

"THE PRISONER," SAID THE PRISONER, ADDRESSING HIM TO NOTICE HIS
FATHER, "HE IS THE PRISONER, THE MAN HE WAS
BEING WITH."

CASSIDY WAS AT—

"IT IS NEWS OF THE PRISONER TO HEAR—that the
CRIMINALS—the PRISONERS—with a bitter emphasis on the
word—"are treated unworthily to be treated with the
commonest good faith, or the commonest humanity;
are only to be flattered and betrayed like children; to
be kicked and spurned like degraded curs; that govern-
ments are treacherous—and kings as false as hell."

The lady approached the fire-place, and stood intently gazing, and the priest riveted his eye upon the monastic speaker; both, however, continued silently attentive.

"Hear it!" he cried, "hear the intentions of our most righteous, most sapient, most religious, most honourable, most trustworthy monarch, the spawn of beggarly Scottish nation, abandoned to atheism and idolatry."*

He tore rather than pulled a paper out of the pocket of his doublet.†

"Observe," he said, with bitter irony, "these righteous intentions are declared in council published in the Star Chamber, and signified to the good City of London by means of her most worthy and worshipful aldermen and mayor. 'The king'—nay, mark me, I beseech you—'The king had never'—no, never!—'the intention—not the *least* intention of granting toleration or indulgence to the Catholics.' The damned hypocrite, the cursed hypocrite and deceiver!

'Not the least intention! Oh, Tom!—oh, Percy! where art thou, honest lad? What! thou wert a mere foolboy in the hands of this crowned rascal-pedant—thou oughtest to have been flogged, my heart! What! didst thou not read dissembling and falsehood in his very eye—his small odious animal eye—and in that fawning gait and lolling tongue of his? Thou oughtest to have deciphered him on the first glance at his doublet.

The charge of idolatry we find perpetually urged by the Catholic writers against the reformers—why, it might be difficult to say.

"Butler's English Catholics:" from Winwood these proclamations are taken.

countenance, a murrain on thee, poor dupe, as thou art, honest Tom!"

"Go on," said the priest, calmly, "I am anxious"...

"Aye, I cry your reverence's mercy. I am become a fool, I think, prating like an old scold; but—only call on me!"

And an expression fierce and fiery agitated his features for a moment; then he became more calm, and he read on:

"'If he thought his son,' our dainty Prince Henry, that flower of chivalry, 'if he thought his son would *condescend* to any such course, he would wish the kingdom forestalled to his daughter.' To Elizabeth II. We are not worthy, it seems, to be ruled by men—we must have women set over *us*. We have not had enough of one she-devil, it seems."

"Go on," said the priest; "read on, I pray you."

"'That the mitigation of the payments of the rec-sant Catholics, was in consideration that not any one of them had lifted up his hand against the king at his coming in.' The dupes!—the fools!—the asses!—the idiots! What measure can be meted to them that they do not richly deserve? 'At his coming in!' Oh! where were we then—when we might have whipped that rascally king and his ragged troops of beggars back to starve upon their hills! Fools!—idiots!—fools!"

"I beseech you, Mr. Catesby," said the father, assuming a certain quiet authority in his voice and manner; "let a truce be put to these passionate denunciations of feeling, more worthy of some stage-player

in a tragedy, than of a Catholic gentleman and statesman, and soldier. The night wears; the moments are precious; invective is not action. Had there been a few more silent but resolute thoughts in place of so many vain and irritating words, we might have met with different treatment; we might have *imposed* the law we now receive. Of words come nothing—still waters alone are deep.”

Catesby had long ceased to colour at the father's reproof, like a lectured schoolboy; but at these words the hot blood rushed for a second to his cheek, then as suddenly subsided. He bit his lip under the thick moustache which covered it;—then gently crossed the room; reached himself a chair; sat down by the priest and in a tone as cool and subdued as it had before been vehement, finished the reading of the paper he held in his hand.

“ ‘ His hand against him on his coming in,’—where was I?—‘and so he gave them a year of probation to conform themselves; which seeing *it had not wrought that effect,*’”—here he lifted up his head, and exchanged a sarcastic smile with the priest—“ ‘ which, seeing it had not wrought that effect, *he had fortified all the laws that were against them—*’ ”

The lady shrank back, and cast up her eyes to the ceiling in a sort of wild adjuration. Even the priest, passive as he was, started.

Catesby, this time, was the least demonstrative of the party; he read on, “ ‘ *fortified all the laws that were against them, and made them stronger* (saving

from blood, from which he has a natural aversion),” —the priest and the reader once more exchanged a grim smile—“ ‘and commanded *that they should be put into execution to the uttermost.*’ ”

He folded the paper, replaced it in his pocket, still maintaining the impassive manner, which, at the reproof of the priest, he had assumed.

The lady clasped her hands in anguish, looking round the room in a sort of wild dismay.

The priest said—

“ And I hope all the Catholic nobility and gentry of this land will find patience sufficient to bear these additional inflictions; that such may be the case, shall be the object of my daily and nightly prayers.”

And he bowed his head.

But it was impossible to discern from the tone of his voice whether he spoke ironically or not.

“ But our very existence is at stake,” cried the lady, in a deplorable voice, “ so bravely as we have struggled against the overwhelming waters! The vessel is finally wrecked!—and the cause irretrievably ruined!”

“ So many poor creatures, too, on whom these fines press so heavily—indulgently as, we must confess, they were in general exacted under the old rule—they will now be deprived of their very bread,” said the priest, compassionately.

But the eye of Catesby was flashing fire.

“ Let them take the purse,” cried he, “ mother! let them take the purse! who is base enough to regard such considerations? No! if to save all that is dear to

I were asked once to cross the threshold of one of our cursed assemblies, perish house—perish estate—perish all—they should go.”

Then turning to the father.

As for those miserable impoverished creatures of whom you spoke, means may be found to sustain them, it is, if they show blood enough, and *feel* their necessities as they ought; but I have more news for you, my father; will you hear it, or have you had enough?”

“Nay, my son, I detest disguises,” said this prince of sivers, “let there be no secrets between me and thee.”

“Nay, the matter is no secret, for it relates to another proclamation of our Scotch Solomon, or Aristides; I let me which is the term in fashion at present, but merits both

They are at fisty-cuffs, as usual, in his own most *armed* church as it seems. But *that's* not news to you, or to me either; the establishment and the dissenters brawling, but our sapient monarch hath no fear but his wisdom he shall compose such immaterial differences. ‘But’—saith this proclamation,” taking out a small printed paper, and bending down to see it by the light of the fire, so that his face was concealed from the priest. “‘But a greater contagion to the national religion than could proceed from those light differences,

is imminent by persons common enemies to them both—namely, the great number of priests, both semi-Calvinists and Jesuists, abounding in the realm; partly upon the vain confidence of some innovation in matters of religion to be done by him; which he never intended, *nor is any man reason to expect.*’”

This proclamation is given by Butler: it is not in Winwood.

"I am not going to curse him again—the reptile!" said Catesby, lifting up his head, "I have nearly done. 'He therefore commands all manner of seminarists, Jesuits, and other priests whatsoever, to depart from the realm, and never to return on pain of being left to the penalty of the law without hope of favour or remission.'

"I hope you are satisfied, madam," now turning to his mother. "Our new most gracious majesty, whom——preserve, will not be behind his predecessor of glorious memory, in paternal care for his most godly kingdom. . . . This will not take one jot of colour from your cheek, sir," turning to the Jesuit.

He spoke true; the priest preserved all the usual untroubled gravity and dignity of his demeanour. He was a man of courage, and a gentleman; so far he did no discredit to the very high place he held in his order.

But the lady looked at him anxiously, cast a hurried glance round the apartment as if danger were already approaching, and started and turned pale as the wind shook the window shutters.

"One thing more, and my story is ended," said her son, drawing his chair nearer to the fire, and extending his feet towards it.

"Tresham and Digby, and some of our more influential people (I myself never hoped any thing from measures of this kind), persuaded us at a meeting we held at Tresham's house on the Strand, that it might not be without use to present a petition to Bancroft—late nominal Bishop of London, now of Canterbury. Every man has his own ideas upon such subjects; I am never for useless humiliations, but I was overruled; so

he drew up a most loyal and most humble petition, and went in a body to Lambeth to present it."

The priest now for the first time began to look fidgetty and uneasy.

"Tresham and Digby!" repeated he. "Those young men are lukewarm enough in the cause, very fit instruments for so extraordinary a proceeding."

"Tresham is as cold as an icicle in December, and calculates every step he makes in life with the precision of a posture-master. Digby is of too sensitive a *conscience*, as he calls it, and is influenced by his wife, old Mulsho's daughter, quite of the bygone school—but he's a fine fellow—a noble, warm-hearted, high-spirited fellow, and I love him as my brother."

The priest took not the slightest notice of this little outbreak of affection, but said:

"You went to Lambeth, I conclude?"

"We did so, all in a body; and I do think the Catholic body, take it in the mass, is composed of the very simplest ninnies. A man might drive them or lead them like a flock of sheep."

The priest smiled inwardly at this remark; he knew well this sheep-like quality of his spiritual children, quite as well as the unsuspecting bell-wether of the flock who had made the notable discovery.

"Really, Mr. Catesby, your digressions to-night—"

"I crave pardon, but there was something ridiculous enough to make your reverence yourself laugh, to see us all going so good and so humble to his reverence, the pretended archbishop of these realms. There was his wife's coach waiting at the door, if I recollect right, or,

stay, was it the children's waggon? I cry your mercy, but I clean forgot I was in a holy archbishop's house, when I saw the women servants, and the lady, and the nurses, and the little ones."

"You didn't surely, Robert," said the lady. "This is your idle talk."

"May be so," said he, carelessly; "for when we were at length admitted to the right reverend presence, had he been the holy father himself, instead of the miserable bastard bishop that he was, he could not have demeaned himself more proudly."

"He looked at us, and we well deserved it . . . at all these Catholic gentlemen of birth and blood drawn from veins that were knights in the battle field, when his miserable ancestors were scullions. . . . He looked upon these gentlemen as if they were scarcely worthy to kiss the dust beneath his feet. And in answer to our humble petition, which Digby read in a voice and manner—I wish you had heard that, father," turning to the priest—he was pleased to say,

" 'That the measures of Elizabeth, which these gentlemen were pleased to deem severe, would be found mild in comparison with those which were soon to be passed and executed in earnest! . . . * You must be instructed, sir,' " turning again to the priest, " 'that in the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it had been thought advisable to pursue a middle course in their regard, inclining rather to mildness than severity; not amounting to absolute impunity, nor yet to punishment equal to their merits; this conduct being adopted by

* Butler, E. C., from Bartoli, lib. iv., c. 3.

majesty's ministers, because they could not foresee would take place at her decease; for if the wrath of heaven should then have placed a popish king upon the throne—you mark that reverend father—"

The priest bent his head significantly.

He might retaliate upon the Protestants.'"

He might retaliate upon the Protestants that persecuted which they had inflicted upon the Catholics during the reign of her majesty, in like manner as they had revenged the sufferings of the Catholics in the reign of that pious child, Edward VI., upon the Protestant subjects of Mary. But thanks be to God,' continued the pious archbishop, 'these apprehensions are groundless; the king, his most sacred majesty, is firmly seated upon his throne, and is blessed with issue who will ensure our security for the future. Thus the time is come when we may act against the Catholics with due severity,—ergo, without mercy—in other words, exterminate them. . . .

I never spent morning in which I learned so much, as on that visit to his grace, the married Archbishop of Canterbury, and," he concluded as he folded the paper, "and," with a dark vengeful look that gave a dreadful expression to his countenance, "*I for one am not going to forget it.*"

The answer of the priest to this last speech, was to repeat, in a monotonous manner, the following passage of Scripture from the Vulgate: I give it you in the English version:

"And the congregation of Israel came to Rehoboam, and said, Thy father made our yoke grievous, now,

therefore, make thou the grievous service of thy father and his heavy yoke which he put upon us lighter, and we will serve thee; and the people came to Rehoboth the third day, as the king had appointed, saying unto them, come to me again the third day; and the king answered the people roughly, after the counsel of the young men, saying, my father made your yoke heavy, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions,' *Est voluntas dei!*'

Catesby turned angrily from the priest, whose air of tranquillity drove him, as it was intended to do, well-nigh distracted, and said in a cross, hasty manner to his mother,

"I am raging with hunger, and you will not give me any supper."

"I crave pardon, my son, your news has confounded my senses, I think: I will see to your providing directly."

And she left the room.

Then Catesby turned to the priest, and fixed his eyes upon him with almost stern severity, saying,

"And is it always to be thus?—are dust and ashes for ever to be thrown upon and smother the flame? Such smouldering cats into the very heart of life."

The priest lifted up his head, and eyed him with a keen, meaning, half reproachful glance, as much as to say,

"Even you!—do *you* not understand me?"

And then bending his eyes upon the floor, his countenance resumed its accustomed expression of serenity.

"Only satisfy me that it were not wrong . . ." said the other, warmly.

“What wrong?—To struggle for a sinking cause, to risk life and estate for a perishing faith, as so many holy martyrs have done before you. If you mean that—who said that was wrong?”

“To shed blood though,” said the other, roughly, “the blood of one’s fellow-creatures—is that wrong?”

“*Distinguo*,” said the priest, “undoubtedly, to shed blood, save in a just cause, is wrong—nay, is a sin unto death: but who declares it wrong to shed blood *in a just* cause? Every child can answer you *that*. The cause in which blood is shed, constitutes the action a glorious deed of heroism, or a cruel murder. The man who sheds blood in self-defence, is acquitted ever, by the rude jurisprudence of human institutions—how much more, in the higher court of conscience. The man who sheds blood in defence of another, is not only acquitted, but honoured as a hero—the man who sheds blood in defence of our holy religion, is considered as a sainted martyr.”

And having pronounced this decision, as if answering the indifferent question in metaphysics, the father sank back in his chair, and resting his folded hands against his bosom, began very composedly to turn his thumbs, as if lost in meditation.

Robert rose and paced the room with quick and impatient steps: nature pleaded against the sophistry of the casuist. The abhorrence of bloodshed is common to all who are unaccustomed to it: he remembered the only occasion on which he had committed an act of violence, and he shuddered still at the recollection.

“The casuists,” continued the father, as if speaking

to himself, "have been much divided upon the subject of assassination, or more properly abstraction of life without open battle; for that term assassination is a mere vulgarism, derived, I know not from what fable of some old Eastern shiek or man of the mountain, as he is called. Abstraction of life without open battle may, *probably*, for there is a probable opinion on both sides, be justified by various reasons, under given circumstances: though questionless in ordinary cases, it is a crime of the deepest dye."

"Thou shalt not kill—" shouted a voice within Robert's heart, as if from some supernatural source.

He started as if he had really heard it.

"But the commandment, sir," said he, approaching the priest.

"Oh, sir!" said the Jesuit, bending his head in ironical submission, "I cry you mercy: when did *you* set up for a doctor in Israel, an expounder of these matters?"

Catesby shrank back abashed.

Nothing could appear to one of his habits of mind more offensively presumptive and absurd, than for him to set himself up as a judge or arbiter in things appertaining to moral philosophy or religious doctrine, he continued his walk, and the priest his soliloquy.

"The commandments taken in their first apparent and abstract and unmodified sense are evidently inadequate for our direction in the various contradictions of life: we must take them with allowances—with exceptions—with such allowance and with such exception as men called upon by holy church for our instruction in such matters have decided upon. Abstraction of life without open

battle—evidently justifiable, provided the *cause* be just—palpably justifiable in cases where open battle is a thing altogether unattainable, impossible, or the precursor of a manifest defeat—as in contests between individuals and wicked governments for instance, &c. &c.”

He closed his eyes here, as if lost in his own meditations upon the subject, leaving the sentence to sink into the heart of his auditor.

No more was said, for the door opened, and the lady and Ambrose, bearing a supper hastily got together, entered: but had there been no such interruption, more would not at this time have been uttered: the Jesuit knew well where to stop—he was one who understood the full force of the reiterated maxim of the wise king,

“There is a time for all things.”

The table was spread,—a rude repast in comparison with the one lately set before the priest. It might be that time pressed, it might be that the lady was indifferent in providing such things for the *lay* wayfarer, even though her own son.

But it mattered not: the appetite of Catesby was gone. Thoughts, that it sickened him to dwell upon, were rising and combating in his heart: the voice of honest, good, simple nature was crying within against the sophistications of fanaticism and passion.

His cheek paler and paler—his eye beaming with a deeper and more restless fire—there he sat—endeavouring to touch the ungrateful food; while the priest, his eyelids so far dropping that it was difficult to say

whether his eyes were closed or not, watched him with his wily glance.

At length Robert pushed the viands away, and filling a large beaker with wine, drank it off; then resuming his place by the fire, and lost in a sort of sullen contemplation, he looked upon the decaying embers of the cedar wood which were now dying into blackness.

The storm had ceased; an awful stillness pervaded the house; the low breathings of the priest, who, wearied with his toil, had sunk to sleep in his chair, were all that was heard. While Catesby sat in dark and gloomy rumination, pondering upon things which had never before presented themselves to his imagination.

At last he rose, asked his mother to give him a lamp, stole up the dark and narrow staircase which led to his room, as if accompanied by some fearful apparition: his face pale, his eye filled with horror: and rushing to his apartment, flung himself weary and exhausted upon his bed.

CHAPTER III.

“ Ma voi prendete l'esca, si che l'amo
Del antico avversario a sé vi tirà;
E però poco val freno, o richiamo.”

Dante.

priest had sunk to rest the moment his head
| his pillow of down.

satisfied with what had passed, the measures
had thrown his scholar and friend into such an
of disappointment and passion were rather agree-
an otherwise to this cold-hearted, calculating,
bitious man. The termination he most depre-
o the dark story of a century of religious
ons so lately closed, was that of an equitable and
l arrangement between the parties; nothing
uld satisfy him, or the party with which he
out a return to the old spiritual despotism of
sthood and of Rome, as the head and keystone
priestly domination, which mankind had ex-
such oceans of blood and tears in the vast
o overthrow. Any thing like an equitable ar-
ent of the contending claims was abhorrent to
ights: and if he insisted upon the demand being
at present, to that of toleration, he knew well—
ght he knew—under the at present unsettled
men's minds, what use the crafty and able body

to which he belonged, would soon be able to make of the opportunities that would be thus afforded them.

It is certain he had, like others less penetrating than himself, been disappointed in the king; he had believed, and perhaps with very great reason, that his secret inclinations went with Rome, but he felt that this imprudent and insulting defiance of the whole Catholic body, was the next best thing to an open and determined support of them. The impending peace with Spain too, had occasioned him very great annoyance; he dreaded that some connivance at the private celebration of their religious rites by the Catholics, might have been made a condition of it; a connivance, which by satisfying every conscientious wish on the part of the conscientious members of that body—unquestionably the large majority—might have reconciled them to the existing order of things, and restored the peace and tranquillity of the first years of Elizabeth.

His business and that of his followers was to profit by the contentions of mankind.

The downfall of their influence in England he regarded as the inevitable consequence of a good understanding between the well-intentioned and the government, from the provisions of which his turbulent, ambitious, and dangerous order should alone be excepted.

The news brought by Mr. Catesby entirely dissipated all such apprehensions; it was plain the government had resolved upon driving the Catholics to extremity; it was equally plain, for he knew them well, that there

ere abundance of fiery and high-spirited men who could not submit passively to this new indignity.

There would be no necessity for him, or his fellow-bourers in the work of mischief, to take any prominent part in the threatened movement. The lever was to work; they had only to stand by and remove any obstacles which might interfere to diminish its full operation.

To preach peace as a matter of expediency, was the way, he well knew, to exasperate to the highest degree these impatient spirits.

To preach peace as a matter of principle; to allay the heat and violence of his party by the divine doctrine of finally overcoming evil with good; that was, indeed, as far from his design, as was every feeling of his heart and principles of his mind from those of the divine and lowly prince of peace.

He was perfectly satisfied with the effect at present produced upon the fretful and seething mind of Catesby. He sat by as a cold and heartless spectator, watching the struggle between a naturally honourable and generous nature and the dark effects of his deceitful and wicked doctrines. He measured the agonies of disappointed hope; the passionate cry for vengeance; the restlessavings of that wild and agitated spirit; with the calm calculation of one intent upon his object—and perfectly indifferent as to the means by which it should be attained. He had gauged the depth of passion: he had calculated the strength of the character as coolly as an officer of excise, to use a base simile, might a tank of spirits: he found it *proof*, and was satisfied.

The part that remained for him to play was easy; to stand aside, and, unseen, to watch the wild effects of these agitated fears; gently directing, stimulating, or restraining, as occasion might require.

It was a long time since Mr. Darcy had tasted such sweet repose as he enjoyed that night; but before day-break he had departed, and threading the deepest and most retired lanes, in the most secluded part of the country, made his way, first towards Henlip, the seat of the Abingtons, where he administered the rites of his religion in the same secret and mysterious manner as he had done at Ashby St. Legers: thence, in the same wearisome manner, he proceeded to Coughton, the seat of the Throckmortons, at both places carrying dismay into the hearts of all his friends, by the disastrous intelligence he had to convey.

He travelled, disguised as a pedlar, with a light pack upon his shoulder, filled with such wares as Autolycus carried; he travelled on foot, now through the deep lanes of the country, now winding over the heathy moorlands; now obtaining a lift on a pack-horse, now in a countryman's wain; musing with great satisfaction on what had passed, and anticipating with a pleasing sort of curiosity what form the effervescence would next take.

But alas! for Robert.

Thrown upon his restless bed, a prey to every agitating passion that can distract human nature, his heart writhing with hatred, his soul burning for vengeance—pity, but such a strange pity! not melting, but raging within him, for the unhappy sufferers, the first victims

these new exactions. And pictures of blood and
or alternating with his other visions, he tossed
rered agitation from side to side.

as! was there no one to minister peace to this
sa, and too ardent, and too enthusiastic spirit; to
be waves of passion be still, to tell him of one the
sed and rejected of men, who came as a sheep to the
hter to promote and proclaim the reign of peace.

here were the divine words, the ineffable teach-
which should have guided one whom nature had
l so gloriously? Hath the great master died in

' Are all his divine lessons becoming no avail?

as!—alas!—he had never even heard of them.

e knew nothing of religion but the cloudy idol-
which his priests had taught him, and nothing
hristian morals, but a casuistry which found ex-
and palliations for the indulgence of every pas-
to which his vehement nature was but too apt to
pt him.

ad oh! the weeping and gnashing of teeth in this
darkness of the soul—this wild contention of
elements—this storm of thunder, and lightning,
ail, and fire running along upon the ground.

last nature yielded, and he sank into an uneasy
er.

: Catesby might have dosed and slept about
hours, when he was suddenly roused by a loud

The bells in the little church, close by the garden, were ringing for morning prayers as he started from his bed, and gnashed his teeth at a sound, which he never could hear without the most violent feelings of irritation.

It was his own church, the church belonging to his family, where his ancestors slept entombed close to his garden wall, a part as it were of his house—thus desecrated by the worship of these detested heretics: but that was not the sound which had aroused him—the loud confused noise of an approaching multitude was heard rolling and raging through the air; a dreadful surging sound, to which that of the roar of many waters is as nothing.

He started up, he had thrown himself down in his clothes, and hastily going to the window looked out.

The intelligence of the late proceedings in London, had already, it would seem, reached the country; and the rage for searching out concealed priests was again excited, in all the fury with which such a species of chase was sure to inspire the ignorant vulgar.

The court-yard and garden in front of the house were filling with a crowd of rude people, armed with pitchforks, rakes, spades, scythes, or any thing they could first lay hand upon, and the pursuivants and men-at-arms were already thundering at the door.

The first thought was for the safety of Mr. Darcy. Relying upon the storm of the night for protection, he knew that he had ventured to sleep in the guest

chamber, where was he now? Had he concealed himself?—Had he departed? or was he still slumbering, ignorant of this approaching danger?

Mr. Catesby hurried down stairs—as he passed, he heard the screams and cries of his little excited and irritable children, in agonies of terror, which neither words nor blows could suppress.

No tender father, but irritated to madness by these sounds, he hurried down stairs, and to the room the priest had occupied; he was gone, but his mother, her hands shaking with haste and agitation, was tearing off the sheets, with the assistance of her own woman; hastily folding them, to be deposited in a chest in the room; and endeavouring to efface every trace of recent occupation.

All this time the pursuivants were shouting at, and shaking both doors; cursing and swearing in the most blasphemous manner at the popish curs; and calling to them to unbar the door, or they would batter it about their ears.

“Is he safe, mother?” cried Catesby, “tell me is he safe, or I will hold the door at the peril of my life.”

“Alas! alas! how should I know? Ask Ambrose, where is Ambrose? The bed was empty, and the bed was cold. Oh! holy virgin mother! let him but be safe.”

The battering at the house door, the shouts, the cries, became more desperate and impatient.

“What do you mean, you dogs, by keeping the door?” cried the pursuivants. “The black vermin are escaping into their holes—unbar the door—unbar the

door—or we will break it to pieces, which may do to light your Smithfield fires. There goes, my lads.”

The door burst open, and the pursuivants, followed by the crowd, rushed madly in.

“Scent about, my lads.—This way, Tom—that way, Hugh. Scent the rats out—let us hunt these Downy rats out of their holes. This way, that way, keep the doors! Ay, ay! keep the holes!—Look to the garden door!”

On they rushed, streaming through the house; up the stairs, into the bed chambers; down stairs into the cellars; pulling open cupboards, running their swords into beds, tearing down shelves and wardrobes, dragging out curtains, and bed stuff of every sort, and casting them on the floor; and committing every species of violence and devastation.

They rushed up into the chamber, where the terrified children, almost in convulsions of fear, were roaring and clinging to their pale and screeching nursery maids; they rushed into the guest chamber, where the lady and her serving-woman were still standing: but here they were confronted by Catesby.

He had drawn his dagger, and stood resolutely at the entrance of the room, demanding of the pursuivant what he meant by disturbing a peaceable family in this manner. And how he dared to admit a herd of unauthorised plunderers into his house?

“Do you know, you rascaille, that you have broke my door—and that your vile carcass may hang for it? Get out of my house this instant, with all your rascallions. If you choose to make the search the law

—make it as the law allows—or by all the holy
its of heaven I'll make a law for myself, and drive
; dagger to the hilt in your heart."

The pursuivant retreated a few paces, and turning to
men said: "The black ox lies stabled there, take
word for it; or we should not have Master Catesby
king such a coil."

"Place sentinels round the house and upon the stair-
es."

"Very well, sir: keep the chamber door as long as
u like, but unless your holy father can fly out in a
ff at the window, as witches have aforetime been
own to do—we'll catch him, make you sure of that."

"My son," said Lady Catesby, who was trembling
e an aspen leaf, in spite of all her courage; not, how-
er, altogether from terror, but partly from excessive
dignation: "let the gentleman search the chamber
he please. No priest harbours here, he will find."

Catesby felt the utter uselessness of opposing his single
ength to the torrent that was sweeping like surging
ters through his house;—with his usual exaggeration
feeling, he at once exchanged the attitude of resist-
ce for one of sullen indifference, and sheathing his
gger, retired into the embrasure of an oriel window,
d sitting down upon the window seat, folded his arms
ross his breast, let his head sink down upon it, and
th his limbs extended kept drumming with his feet
ainst the floor, disdaining to look up, or make the
ghtest effort to save his house or property.

The lady stood erect as a statue—a statue she might
ve represented of haughty and proud indignation—

recovered from her first alarm, by the conviction that the priest must have escaped—she, too, stood perfectly passive, now scornfully regarding the outrages that were committed upon all sides of her.

The bedding was torn down; the bed ripped up and scattered upon the floor; the hanging at the back of the bed rudely rent asunder, in case a priest should have harboured behind; the chests and wardrobes pulled into the middle of the room, were ransacked from top to bottom and all their rich contents littered upon the ground; the men passed their swords in various places through the tapestry which covered the walls; sounded them with mallets, to discover whether they were hollow, and whether some secret door might not be detected—but all in vain. *There was* a secret door leading by a narrow staircase to a small vaulted passage, which communicated with the summer-house at the corner of the garden, but it was so beautifully contrived and fitted that it escaped discovery.

They were disappointed in their search, but far from satisfied; for a pair of sheets which had been found among a quantity of rich silks in the chest; and the presence of the master and mistress of the house in this particular chamber, had convinced them that a priest, as had been reported, had slept there that very night. A pursuivant now went rudely up to Catesby, saying:

“I’ll trouble you, master, not to sit kicking your heels in that fashion—and just covering, maybe, the very hide we are in search of. Get up, if you please, and let’s have a look at what’s under you.”

“Aye!” said the other—“have at it, Tom. Sure as

you are alive—that's the hide, and he's gone down there: up, up, with you, my master, and it please you. We are not very much upon our ceremonials with your Catholic cattle. We know you to be a pack of liars of old—up, up, with you, sir."

Catesby had lifted up his head, and he now stared at the men without moving. There was something in this brutal insolence which confounded even him.

He! commanded by a base clown! ordered about by a reptile such as this!

"Do you know who you are speaking to sirrah?"—he said, at last.

"Ay, ay—we know well enough—one master Catesby of Ashby St. Legers, and as black a papist as ever lent a faggot to burn a true man. Will it please you to get up, or must we make you?"

A struggle so degrading was not to be endured.

He rose like a scowling mastiff from his lair.

The men laughed and sneered.

"We thought we'd rout you out easy enough, master—ay, ay, now for it."

And falling to work with vehemence, they soon wrenched down the window-seat; nothing was seen below, however, nothing but the bare brick walls. No hidden outlet was to be discovered there.

The men went maundering and grumbling out of the room, to commit fresh outrages in another place.

Catesby remained standing where they had left him.

His countenance had by this time assumed a fearful expression, but he spoke not a word.

While the lady almost sobbing with rage, reiterated,

“ Saints above! saints above!—is it a Catesby!—a Catesby thus insulted under his own roof!”

But presently mastering her passion, she came up to him and whispered:

“ He must have escaped—he must be, by this time, far from hence.”

But he seemed not to heed her, he stood like one petrified with astonishment and indignation.

At last these few ominous words dropped from his lips.

“ If I could blow up these walls, and all that is within them, and bury these rascals, and the evidences of my disgrace in one common ruin!”

He looked pale, he looked livid as he said this.

“ Shiver all to atoms with this desecrated house of my fathers!”

“ How the children are screaming,” said the lady.

“ Ah, poor little fools—and they too—ay, ay—all of us—poor little wretches how they scream! they will go mad with terror.”

“ Heigh, my boys! heigh, children!” running hastily up the nursery stairs, and flinging open the door with his usual impetuosity, “ What’s the matter now? what are ye afraid of?”

The screaming children ran to him, and clung to his garments; they were usually very much afraid of their father, but in the present agony, such fears were forgotten.

“ Poor little wretches, I was wishing to have blown you up too, was I?” said he, touched by the confiding manner in which their poor little hands clasped his

neers, and their little beseeching, agonised countenances were lifted up to his.

“Come, come, don’t be afraid, Tom, don’t cry, Jack; wait till thou’rt a big man, and thou shalt run a dagger through such curs, or thrust ’em out of the house, that would be better still.”

“Or poke ’em into the great fire,” said the little one.

“Ha! ha! ha! the great fire!—the great blast!—the great explosion!—why, lad, your wits jump with mine. Yes, blow up Ashby St. Legers to the heavens, and let the last of the miserable and insulted house of Catesby perish in its ashes!”

CHAPTER IV.

“ I dare do all that may become a man,
Who dares do more is none.”

Macbeth.

AFTER committing every possible outrage upon the house and furniture that could be perpetrated in the space of a few hours, the pursuivants, mortified and disappointed at their defeat, retired, followed by the whooping, insulting crowd, who consoled their vexation by reiterating their promises to the master and mistress of the house that ere long they should see them again.

The rude laughter, the insolent jest, the blasphemous curses were gradually sunk in silence as the crowd dispersed among the different taverns in the village hard by, to drink and guzzle, in imitation of their good king, and of those captains from Flanders, who had unhappily imported this vice into a once sober country. Yes, let me observe by the way, the men who fought at Crecy and Agincourt, the men who withstood the Spaniard and blasted the Armada, belonged to a nation remarkable for its sobriety; and if any one doubts it, let him look into his Camden.

The day was soft and calm, a still, sweet morning, at the latter end of February. There was that delicious mildness in the air, that promise of the coming spring.

which renders some days in February so inexpressibly delightful: the tall pines were giving out their liveries, the woodbine opening its soft green buds, the robin hopping along the walks, turning his head and his bright, merry, impatient eye upon the passenger: all in that shrouded and quiet garden, was still and pleasant.

Catesby, little soothed by the soft influences of nature, was pacing up and down the green terrace which still subsists, immersed in troubled and stormy thoughts. His mind, indeed, seemed almost overthrown with the violence of his rage and despair. After the pause that had been permitted, after the relief from these revolting and most unwise persecutions—to be exposed to them again, and with a degree of insolence far exceeding any he, at least, had ever experienced before; and all through what? through the heartless treachery of that faithless king, and his deceitful ministers, and the cruel indifference of a nobility and gentry, whose abject flattery, and base subserviency to their new idol, filled his heart at once with the bitterest contempt and disdain.

“What a generation of vipers!” thought he, “what a hydra brood of oppressors! What matters it to cut off one,—two,—three—even; fresh and fresh, and worse and worse would succeed. ‘He hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions,’—had it not proved so with them as regarded that old queen, once so hated, and now so regretted? But with such a nobility, such a gentry, ready to pander to every wish of the faithless pedant whom they delighted to honour—what was to be expected? Must then the old time-

honoured Catholic race of England be gradually extirpated, trampled into dust, by a base, rascally crew like this?"

He paced up and down like a tiger in his cage: no hope of emancipation, no room for his fatal spring: fettered, imprisoned, barred in! A miserable assassination or so—what a base and dastardly revenge! for let Mr. Darcy say what he would, assassination ~~was~~ a miserable and despicable revenge after all; dastardly and unmanly; might suit the Stories and such vagabonds, but unworthy of a soldier and a gentleman.

He paced up and down like a lion behind his bars; he looked this way, he looked that; he looked at his house, his insulted, outraged, defaced, and ruined home; he recollected his wish to have blown it into atoms, and to have perished with his enemies in its ruins.

Aye, he and his, and that swarm of filthy vermin, which, like the obscene frogs of Egypt, had entered into his chambers, and upon his beds, and upon the houses of his servants . . . Aye, all of them, every one of them at once, and himself, and his children, and his mother, and all he loved, perishing in one loud explosion.

Suddenly a new and strange expression was seen in his face; his eye burned—his eyes looked like living coals; his livid cheek became of a deep crimson, his brow dark as a thunder-cloud; his breath came thick and hard, he clutched with his hand that held his cloak, he

it sharply round him—he strode like a maniac up down that terrace.

Then he plunged into the deep shade of a thicket of yew and fir trees, through which a narrow walk winding, and where no eye could follow him.

And where no eye but one did follow him: but that ever-sleeping and all-seeing eye penetrated the black sullen shade, and watched that wretched and that wretched man—his agonies and his resolves.

When Catesby returned to the house, he found it giving an appearance of desolation, which well suited the gloom and sullenness of his mind.

His mother, proud and resentful as himself, had felt the insults offered to her family with equal bitterness, though she manifested her feelings in a less wild and wretched manner.

When their persecutors had disappeared, and her father had left her to take his solitary walk in the garden, the servant had begun the task of endeavouring to restore order to the confusion in which the whole house was thrown.

The destruction was shameful; chests' lids torn off, doors of wardrobes and cupboards rent from their hinges; chairs and tables broken and thrown in heaps; the oak panelling of the walls stripped off and scattered in various places, and the rich tapestry and arras hanging in shreds from the walls.

The lady, seeing the servants sorrowfully preparing

to remedy in some degree these disasters—to nail up the pieces of ragged tapestry—to restore the panels to their places—and to mend the fractures in the furniture—sternly forbid any attempt of the kind to be made.

“Range the rooms, if you will, in their accustomed order,” she said, “but no servant of mine shall spend his pains to conceal the scandalous and disgraceful ravages that have been made: there let them remain, a testimony of the tender mercies shown by a heretic government to its unoffending subjects. Nay, good Ambrose, let be,” as the old man was endeavouring to replace the fractured back of a rich velvet chair, before he restored it to its place: “let us remain surrounded with ruins, a type of the forlorn and broken condition of our violated church.”

She sat down sullenly in the forlorn-looking apartment, which but the evening before had been so rich, so well ordered, though so gloomy; and watched the tall, dark figure of her son as he paced the terrace, of which she commanded a view.

When he returned to the house, there was a something in his expression which she could not exact comprehend. She looked at him with a mixture of interest and awe. The whole man seemed absorbed in some fixed idea. His gestures were no longer free; his voice no longer clear and energetic; nor his speech animated and eloquent. He seemed lost in thought; gave few and short answers to the questions she from time to time put to him; and paced the room, or s

musings in silence, with an expression of fierce but gloomy exultation upon his face.

Every now and then he glanced upon the tattered remnants of the walls, and upon the broken furniture, with a certain air of sullen satisfaction.

"I bade them leave them as they were," said the lady.

"Aye, aye, where are my boys?"

The two children were brought to him.

He took up the eldest, placed him upon a table, and scanned his features with his deep and searching eye:

"You were frightened, John," he said, sternly and gravely; "you were a fool to be frightened; boys must learn to fear *nothing*—don't you know that?"

"Fear God and holy church," muttered the younger one.

"Fear *nothing*. Do you hear, John?"

The boy fixed his eyes in grave attention upon Catesby's face; he seemed to comprehend that something of weight, something far beyond what was common, was in his father's meaning.

The father's eye softened at the brave child's steady and earnest look.

"You'll remember this, John, when your father has been cut into pieces by these bloody heretics. You'll remember that you are to *revenge* him."

"Yes," said the boy, gravely; "strike again. When they've cut you in pieces, cut them in pieces; and so I will when I'm big enough to have a sword."

He did not embrace him—he did not kiss him—he

did not place his hand upon the little head to bless him ! Blessings would, indeed, have stuck in his throat.

He set him down gravely on the floor, and said :

“ That’s right.”

Then he ordered the children to be taken away, and resumed his walk.

The door was again opened, and by a shrewd, rather rustical-looking youth, who attended upon Catesby as his servant.

His features were vulgar, his lips thick and coarse, an immense shock of hair covered his head—but his eye was quick and shrewd, and his expression of countenance honest and good-tempered. He was the son of the old butler, who had lived from childhood in the family, and was treated with the most unreserved confidence; and Thomas, who had ever proved himself faithful, and was of a quick wit and penetration, was a favourite with, and enjoyed much of the confidence of his master.

He now opened the door looked round the room, and seeing no one but Catesby, and the lady, said—

“ Here’s a cousin of mine, sir, just come in—son, I believe, to my aunt Margery—if as how *you ever heard of her*. May I ask him to take dinner and a bed here, for he’s come far, the ways are foul, and he is very weary?”

“ Do as you please,” said his master, carelessly.

“ My aunt Margery’s son, I said, sir,” repeated Thomas, coming up to him and speaking in a sort of managed voice which could be heard by the person ad-

sed, but with difficulty followed by any one. My aunt Margery, and please you, sir, who's very like ah's fourth son—may I venture to bring him up—er all this gallimaufry, or had he better be put in still once?"

Catesby started.

"You don't say so—what?"

"The tall dark bony one."

"Let him be your cousin still—we have spies in the use—(louder)—yes, I have some business with him; give him something to eat in the pantry, and when I will send him up to me."

Thomas disappeared.

"It is—it must be Tesmond," said Catesby, going up his mother, and speaking in a very low voice: "the very man of all men upon earth that I wished to see."

He pursued his walk, however, and waited full three quarters of an hour before he again summoned Thomas, and then he called out loud enough to be heard throughout the house—"Is that your cousin come up from Gravesend, with news of our last venture? Is he low? Send him up to me."

A tall dark man, so thin that every muscle of his face stood out in bold and knotty relief under his olive skin—with eyes large, dark, and eager—hair jet—and limbs bony—now entered the hall; and taking off his cap, stroked down the long lank hair over his forehead, as a countryman might, and "hoped he saw his honour all."

"You come from Gravesend, Thomas tells me; my

good friend, you are welcome. Have you tasted of the Lady Catesby's beef and ale?"

"I thank your honour—freely, freely."

"How are the ways?"

"Deep and difficult enough, please your honour, and I have been delayed a couple of days, for the floods below are out."

"Have you letters for me?"

"Yes, please your honour, and a letter of credit, too, if your honour will be pleased to read it. There are particulars about the carach, which is safely arrived at last, too tedious to write: my letter of credence will inform you that I am competent to give your honour every information, might it please you to grant me a short audience."

"Come in here," opening the door of the apartment where the lady was sitting; "you may come in, there is no one but my mother here."

The door was opened. As he ushered the stranger in, the lady cast a hasty glance through the window; old Ambrose was in the walk before it, which was shaded from the rest of the garden by a thick plantation of trees, employing himself with a pruning hook; through the other window, Thomas might be seen raking a border.

Having satisfied herself by this hasty glance, that there was sufficient protection against a sudden surprise; she rose hastily, and approaching the stranger with eagerness, exclaimed—

"You!—have you ventured to our unhappy house?"

Madam," said the dark stranger, looking round, was because the news of this morning's outrage had shed me where I was journeying, that I came to at you are pleased to call your unhappy house—but which I designate as your glorious! your honoured one! for blessed is he who is thought worthy to suffer this cause.'

"You see how it has been with us to-day,"—said she turning round—"but the seed was not in it.' In vain did their malice rage against him, the holy friend of the Church; her brightest candle in this benighted world was bestowed elsewhere."

'He *had* been here then?"

'He departed this morning."

'You take this patiently, sir," said Father Tesmond, he was no other, turning round to Catesby, after he had himself taken a chair by the lady, who had resumed a

'I am commanded so to do," was the reply.

'There are commands unto which nature finds it most impossible to yield obedience. The breach of which is a venial sin—for who can resist the force of nature? I am glad, very glad however, to find you patient."

"Ay," said the lady, looking reproachfully at her husband, "we ought to be glad to find a Job, where we had expected, as we thought, a Judas Maccabeus."

"It is the better part—the better part—no doubt, my lady," said the father: "but there are women in this church—women in this church—who would find it easier to play the part of a Jael or of a Judith, than to imitate

that patient and much enduring man. Either part is to choose; probabilities lie on both sides; and it is allowable to speculate where it may be doubtful how to act; you, madam, I see for one would incline to the less patient scale."

"I own it, I have no patience," said she, bitterly, "a man! and submit to such affronts as these!—a son! and see the gray hairs of his mother insulted before his eyes. A father! and see his little ones distracted with terror.... And his revenge—his noble revenge—shall be—to take a few turns, sullenly, on the shady terrace in his garden—and to tell his little one—to fight some time."

The cheek of Catesby did not kindle at this taunt; not one drop of blood hurried faster in his veins; he looked unmoved as he had done before; he fixed his eyes upon the priest as if waiting his reply.

"Time," said the Father, "some time—yea—when the work is finally consummated, and the sanctuary in ruins. I fear me, it will then be too late: this land will be like the howling wilderness, abandoned to the obscene creatures of the desert—'and the great owl shall lodge there, and satyrs shall dance there.' But we have had martyrs enough: the land is reeking with their blood, and sick with cruelty: let us lie down and humble our heads and die."

"And is it you I hear speak thus?" said the lady, with a scornful accent. "Is this your teaching?"

"I am a man of peace," said the Jesuit, bowing his dark head with a strange, unnatural affectation of humility, "but were I not!—"

And his large eye kindled.

Catesby still continued as calm as if it were impossible to excite him to feeling or to action.

“Were you not—what then?—”

Very slowly and quietly.

“I would shew myself a *man*,” said he sternly.

“I would be bound you would,” cried the lady.

“What man dare, I dare,” said Catesby, in the words of Macbeth, “but this is forbidden to us . . .”

And he turned away and walked again up and down the room.

The lady watched him with angry, contemptuous glances. The priest looked vexed and perplexed: so ready a submission to these peaceable injunctions, was what he least expected or wished to find.

“Have you heard, then, Master Catesby,” at last he said, “what has been doing in London—that mother of iniquities—during the last few weeks? News travels slowly at this time of the year: have you heard?”

“You have nothing to tell me,” said Catesby; “I came down here last night.”

The dark countenance of the priest grew darker, he almost scowled upon him, and he said,

“And it is your resolution, for your part, to submit without opposition to all this?”

“So I am commanded,” was the reply.

The priest again bowed his head, and then he sighed, and turning to the lady, said,

“Then prepare—for persecutions and ruin are threatening our unhappy party: our watchers are sleeping, and our strong men have delivered themselves to

the power of the enemy. Mr. Catesby has no doubt his own good reasons for keeping terms with this execrable government—let Ashby be bestowed, as so many other estates have been, and will be, on the infidel and base Scot, to levy the fines now heavily due. We must tolerate much, madam, and be content to sleep in a whole skin.”

Catesby gave a slight start, and the colour rose to his cheek at this reproach, but he spoke not.

The lady continued her taunts, the priest his inuendoes, but he bore it all with astonishing patience. The evening had long closed in, the shutters were again fastened, the lamps upon the table lighted, and the same dark and misty gloom hung over the chamber, the same Rembrandt character of deep shadow, all save where the light fell bright upon the place where the lady and the priest were sitting.

The priest seemed to grow more and more heated and impatient; indeed, he appeared scarcely master of his vexation and disappointment at this unexpected effect of Father Darcy's teaching, so exactly the reverse of what had been calculated upon.

The lady looked coldly and haughtily displeased, but Catesby still preserved his impassibility, though it was evidently with increasing difficulty.

At last she rose to take her lamp and to retire, saying, “The priest's chamber is prepared for you, dear sir, it grieves me that I dare offer you no better accommodation.”

“Madam,” replied he, “with such an example of unparalleled submission to injuries before his eyes, who

would not learn to be patient? The holy virgin have you in her keeping, good night."

He opened the door to let her pass, and then with a mingled expression of vexation, perplexity, and ill-repressed rage upon his countenance, resumed his chair.

Catesby came up to him, planted himself directly before him, fixed his eyes sternly upon his face, and said: "I understand your dark speeches full well, do I not? And now I put this one question: If by the perpetration of a tremendous crime the Church could be emancipated, say, ought it to be done?—Say it ought to be done; and it shall be done."

"I know you again now," said the priest, "you speak like Catesby now; but why say *crime*?—Can that be called a crime of which the results would be so glorious? Can there be crime when the holy Church planted in this land shall be rescued from destruction?"

"I speak of a dreadful, a tremendous crime," said he, fiercely; "but say, and it *shall* be done."

"But will the result of what you call a crime be the deliverance of the Church?" said the priest. "Assure me of that, and I repeat it," his eyes sparkling, "it would be a great and glorious deed of heroism, and most assuredly, be the action what it might, no *crime*."

"Deliverance! Aye, aye! deliverance sure enough," said the other; "but I repeat it, it *would* be a dreadful, a tremendous crime."

"You speak in riddles," said the priest, "I do not understand you, but this I say—to dare bravely for the Church, to peril life and fame and estate in her cause,

is great, is glorious: but to peril the soul," his eyes flashing with enthusiasm, "oh, that is the part of an angel."

"You think so?" cried Catesby, eagerly, his eye now flashing bright, as we imagine that of the angel in darkness when he first defied the omnipotent to arms.

"You think so! To peril the soul!—Aye, aye, and my house and estate, and life and fame, gladly! willingly! Yea," with wild enthusiasm, "and the immortal soul to boot, if so it must be!"

The priest regarded him with almost equal enthusiasm.

"There spoke my heart," he cried, with energy. "Yea," his dark eye lighted with a sudden fire, "yea, in that cause I have suffered, laboured, anguished, bled. In that cause I am ready to die, to be imprisoned, degraded, hanged, butchered. In that cause, were it needful, I, too, am ready to peril my immortal soul, aye, and go down into the pit, if so it must be."

This man was a sincere man; he was a sincere though a desperate fanatic; he mistook the promptings of ambition and revenge for those of generous self-devotion, but he was not urging others to a course in which he never intended to venture himself; he had not the worldly prudence of his superior; he was a desperate, daring, and determined man, and mistaken religious zeal had set his whole inflammable nature on fire.

"Do you speak as you feel?" said Catesby, with emotion. "Then hell is yawning, and I have entered upon the way: but before we descend into the pit together, we will kindle a fire which shall blow the whole

cursed generation, among which it is our miserable fate to live, into ten thousand thousands of atoms."

"Your words are wild, your threatenings tremendous, my son, but of great words great deeds are seldom born these promises are vast indeed."

"Trust me, they shall be redeemed," cried he, with a sort of wild defiance, "oh, trust me, they shall, every jot of them be redeemed! You keep but your promise to accompany me to the bottomless pit, of which I shall well deserve to be the tenant, and I'll pledge myself to the event."

"Your words are still wild and wide," said the Jesuit, now resuming that more calm and insidious manner which he had endeavoured to attain as a second nature, and which yielded rarely, though it did at times, to the vehemence of his natural temper, "you speak recklessly of crime and of my participating in crime, but let us consider the matter coolly; if it were a crime, the Holy Virgin forbid that I should be a sharer in it; but I repeat, *nothing* can be called a crime that leads by its consequences to the deliverance of the mourning and sorrowing church of Christ—nothing a crime which saves the thousands of perishing souls, now hastening to destruction in this land forsaken of God. We are taught to purge the sin of heresy by fire as gold is separated from the dross, and save the soul by suffering, which otherwise would perish everlastingly. . . ."

"You speak of the Inquisition," interrupted Catesby, "but her fires consume the guilty only; the miserable heretics to whom such discipline is a mercy. I did not mean to call that a crime. But where the righteous

and the wicked, the innocent and the guilty, the babe of yesterday and the hoary sinner of sixty years, where they shall all, all perish at one blow, I call *that* an enormous crime. Nay, nay, father, it *is* a crime, but only say it, only say an enormous crime may be lawful, only speak, and it shall be done."

"I dare not speak," said the father, shuddering in spite of himself, "I only can give you assurance that in this noble cause of Christ's own church—all things are lawful, if all things are not expedient."

"I am answered—*all* things are lawful."

"Unquestionably: the end justifies the means: it is the foundation stone of all our doctrines."

"The end!" with his wild eyes sparkling terribly; "the end! Oh, it is indeed a noble, glorious end! Deliverance!—final, absolute deliverance!—Triumph unimaginable, unassailable triumph. A wild but certain justice, a fierce but righteous revenge!—wickedness, and tyranny, and blasphemy, and lies, swept away from their habitation—'for a desolation of desolations is determined.' 'Then shall he build again the sanctuary in Zion—and thy God shall return to thee, oh Jacob!'"

And tears—believe it or not as you will, tears blinded those dark and beautiful eyes—tears of enthusiastic joy and thankfulness.

The priest was a determined and ardent character, but he was quite incapable of mounting to a pitch of enthusiastic fanaticism like this; he gazed at the excited, the almost inspired countenance, with adoration; as tears large and slow clouded over the bril-

liant eyes, and fell drop by drop upon the glowing cheek and rugged beard.

Softened for a moment—the woman melted within him; a vision as in a dream came over him; he saw the wild destruction he was meditating, effected; he heard the loud burst of that unearthly thunder as if rending in one tremendous crash the heavens—he saw the multitudes blown up to shattering destruction—houses nodding around him, and the screams of terror, and the wail of unappeasable and ineffectual lamentation, seemed ringing in his ears from every side.

Oh, had but his better angel!—had but some monitor whispered him, is this well?—Oh, had the divine voice of the heavenly master been but once allowed to echo in his heart....!

But it was written—there he stood, the accursed, the awful warning to an execrating world: an example of religious fanaticism, and perverted morality: wretched, miserable man—let not the lesson of this dreadful but over true tale be lost.

Tears—tears of pity filled his eyes for a moment—he dashed them desperately away. He rejected the pleadings of pity—the whispers of conscience: his resolution was taken. That which he had to do—his church—the voice, at least that represented the church to his mind—had declared was lawful.

The priest, still in the dark as to the exact nature of the design, regarded with much satisfaction the expression of stern resolution which soon succeeded upon that varying countenance to tenderness and pity. That

some great enterprise was in contemplation, he felt sure; and such was his confidence in the skill and courage of Mr. Catesby, that he doubted nothing of a successful result.

In this persuasion he retired to the priest's chamber; and little accustomed to enjoy, and as little desirous of enjoying, any of the indulgences of daily life, slept upon his hard pallet in this horrid cell, as the weary labourer in the mine slumbers upon his rocky pillow.

Neither was Catesby's couch restless as the night before; wearied with excitement, he fell into a deep death-like slumber, which lasted till daybreak.

CHAPTER V.

“ Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.”

Shakspeare.

IT was a morning in the latter end of March, when Mr. Catesby, taking leave of his mother and children, and followed by his rustic servant, Thomas Bates, set forward, riding with his accustomed speed to London.

The ways were foul, and the deep lanes excessively heavy, so that it was with great difficulty that the powerful black horse he bestrode could plough through the mire and clay at the rate to which he was urged by his impatient master. The dark and lowring sky, the close gloomy lanes they travelled through, the cold and searching wind which penetrated his breast, were in unison with his thoughts: all, as it were, in a sort of stormy chaos.

His follower meanwhile spurred his hackney forward, and breasted the bitter wind, thinking within himself that he had seen his master in many a rage, and many a quandary, but never in such a strange pass as this. That fresh cause for agitation among the Catholics had arisen, he would not have been slow to observe, even if the outrage of the fatal morning had not been sufficiently significative. And that his master had some

notable enterprise in hand he felt assured; and being a prying and shrewd fellow enough, he resolved not to rest till he had made himself acquainted with it. Not, however, through the slightest evil intention, but merely through that desire to share in the councils, enterprises, and dangers of their superiors, which was common to the dependants of those days; who seem to have been habituated from their infancy to live rather in others than for themselves; and who, with a generous and simple loyalty which it is impossible to help loving, flung away their lives almost without concern, to rescue or shield those esteemed by them as of far more account than themselves.

They reached London in three days.

London was all bustling and riotous with the new court, from which the magnificent decorum of the stately old queen had altogether vanished. Her grave magnificence had been succeeded by scenes of drunkenness, riot, and low debauchery, disgraceful to the times and to the nation. The infection rapidly spread downwards; drunkards and roisterers filled the taverns; and numbers of swashing blades, to use the language of the times, infested the streets—among whom the insolent Scotch favourites played an obvious part: puffed up as they were by the wealth they had already acquired, and looking back with equal contempt upon their own countrymen still starving on the mountains, and upon the fat and somewhat stolid aspect of a nation whom they seemed called upon to over-reach and pillage at discretion. Catesby riding up to the Strand, dismounted at a moderately sized house, and inquiring

whether Mr. Winter was at home, was immediately admitted; leaving Bates to conduct his horses to the nearest hostel.

Mr. Winter, a man of family, and many accomplishments, was fair and handsome, with blue eyes, a hooked nose, and something peculiarly sweet and engaging in his countenance; not in the least intended by nature, as it would seem, to play the part of a dark conspirator; he had proved himself a most active and able man of business, and had, with the assistance of Father Creswell, been the chief medium through which the Catholic negotiations with the court of Spain, with reference to the succession of the infanta, had been carried on.

It is needless to say, that all hope of establishing a Catholic successor upon the throne of Elizabeth, had been latterly abandoned; and that the implied promises by James had been effectual in defeating every scheme in agitation for resistance to his succession. The triumph of his kingcraft was so far complete; he had settled himself quietly upon the throne of England; and all the difficult negotiations in which Mr. Winter had been engaged had fallen to the ground; but he was not a man to resent such a result of his efforts. So long as things went well with his religion and party, he was perfectly indifferent with respect to his own place and importance.

He was now sitting with his window open, which looked upon a small but green and pleasant garden, and commanded the usual view of the Thames, with

their opposite banks now bursting into green, and the Surrey hills swelling behind them. He was writing at a small table, and from time to time laying down his pen, passed his hand across his brow, with an appearance of trouble and perplexity; then he took a few turns in his chamber, and then returning to his table, resumed his task.

The door opened, and Catesby entered. The two friends were in each other's arms—there was the fervent embrace of brothers; and then Catesby, taking a chair opposite to that on which Mr. Winter had been seated, sat down.

Not a word had as yet passed between them, but the eye of Catesby was fixed upon the pleasant and cheerful countenance of his friend.

With an expression almost of reproach, it might be said, he looked upon him, it might be, with something of that feeling, with which men gnawing their tongues for pain, in the agony of some deep internal misery, have been known to curse the light of the cheerful day.

Winter answered the look with one of affectionate and anxious interest, and breaking silence, said,

“ You have sent me a very urgent message, Robert, requiring me to meet you without delay in town—here I am—wherefore come, I have to learn; but your summons would lead me to fear something in your own peculiar had befallen you, still more poignant than the general wound.”

“ My mother and children are well,” said Catesby;

Everard and his wife are well; beyond them, and Tom and thee, the world holds nothing whose weal or woe touches me personally."

"I am glad to hear it," said Winter, "I am glad all old wounds are healed, Robert, and that you have forgotten what had best be forgotten, and are your own man again."

"She is dedicated to her God," said Catesby, with a slight tremble in his voice, for not yet could he allude to that subject without emotion, "and I have dedicated myself also, Winter, but it is to another deity."

"How, another?" asked Winter, eyeing him with considerable interest and curiosity, for there was so great a change in the expression of his face since they had last met, that it seemed scarcely the countenance of the man with whom he had spoken but some few weeks before.

"Dedicated to another!—how so? you speak riddles Robert, you cannot mean . . . and yet I wish it were so—that Eleanor . . ."

"Pshaw!" contemptuously and impatiently. "I hate the thoughts of such things. Is this a time to be marrying and giving in marriage, when the flood is rising which is to overwhelm us all?"

"Dedicated! you said."

"Ay, ay; I said Grace Vaux was dedicated to the only service of God, did I not? a God of mercy and peace—and I have dedicated myself to another god—the god of wrath and vengeance, that's all: it may be the true divinity, what do I know? That is my dedication, Winter; and as that saintly virgin made a holocaust of

my happiness at the altar of her devotion, I have prepared a holocaust of another sort to celebrate mine. Nay, start not, nor look so strangely at me, the vow is registered in heaven, and the holy sacrament has been taken upon it—you look upon one professed, as well as the—ha! ha! you are thinking I have neither the air of a begging friar nor a learned monk, nor a subtle follower of St. Ignatius—may be not, but I have my calling and vocation, nevertheless,” and he laughed in a strange, unnatural manner.

“I hardly know thee, Robert, this morning; I am used to see thee in strange veins, man, but this tops all: what ails thee, Catesby?” he added, more seriously, “something more than common is amiss with you; I never saw you thus before.”

“I should think not,” said his friend, “but to see *you* so much the same, Winter, in spite of all, is perhaps a greater marvel than to see me changed.”

“I don’t know what should change me,” said Winter, quietly, “you know I never expected much from this base king of clubs, and his scoundrel bare-legged Scotsmen, spawn of John Knox and his wretched, beggarly creed: my views led me to a loftier banner, and the race from which emperors and conquerors have sprung; but it was not so to be—all has come to pass as I expected, and fiat voluntas must be my motto, perforce.”

“Why perforce?” said Catesby, bending forward over the table, and fixing his darkly, deeply meaning eye upon his friend. “Why perforce? with cowards and with sluggards it is always perforce, with men *never*.”

“Why, what is to be done? The old childish plan of

assination is at an end. It was always a means
terly abhorrent to me, and now it would be ridiculous
what more so, than to strike the old serpent, when a
young cockatrice, with ten times his virulence, is ready
spring from his blood: you cannot kill them all."

"Why not?" said Catesby.

"Pooh! pooh! man, we never could succeed even
with the old woman, 'there's such divinity doth hedge
king,' saith the poet—and besides, granted—what it is
impossible to grant—that you destroyed the whole brood,
what would it help us? No, no, this cursed Protestant
government is too firmly established; its basis is too
solid. Are there not the two houses and cousins of
royal blood, enough to furnish an interminable Pro-
testant succession: this makes them so secure, man—
they may trample upon us at their pleasure: it's idle
to attempt to overturn a pyramid."

A strange expression again crossed his companion's
face.

"There have been ways found to shatter even pyra-
mids," he said. . . "What if the pyramid thou speakest
of, were torn up from its foundations, and scattered to
the winds; what then?"

"'Tis idle to talk of it," said Winter, with the tone
of a man not to be imposed upon by impossibilities.

"But *what* then?" said Catesby, more earnestly, his
beaming eyes still fixed upon Winter's face, "answer
me at once. Suppose this pyramid of theirs shattered
to its very foundations; suppose kings, princes, lords,
parliament, annihilated at one blow. Imagine such a

catastrophe, and tell me what then? Might not something be builded up *then*?"

"My dear Catesby, when the Spanish Armada failed before this kingdom in arms, that business was decided—there will never be flood powerful enough, nor force strong enough to sweep away this government. To speak plainly—I tell you it is based upon too wide a foundation. It is idle to talk of upsetting the houses of parliament, even if you could command the means for a work bloody enough to call down the execration of mankind upon our heads. I wonder, Catesby, to hear you, a man of sense and action, talk in this wild and romance-like manner."

"We will have no blood," said Catesby, in the same strangely quiet manner. "What happens when it thunders and lightens—men are scorched and blackened, but there is no blood."

Winter looked impatient, as one who hears nonsense.

Catesby stretched out his hand across the table; took hold of that of his friend, and held it with a grasp as of an iron vice; his own was cold as death.

"There was an accident, on the 13th of April last, I think it was: some gunpowder exploded, and thirteen men were killed—do you remember it?"

"Well enough," said Winter, "it was a shocking business."

"Suppose these thirteen had been the sovereign and the estates and nobility of England, what then?"

And loosing the hand he held, he rose from his seat,

d took two or three turns up and down the apartment, while the eyes of Winter followed him.

At last he came back, and throwing himself into a chair close by Winter, said, in a hoarse, low voice,

"I am going to put my life into your hands; and if you like sacrifices as well as some do, send up your old friend Robert Catesby to propitiate the tyrant."

"Speak out," said Winter, "distrust of me! that is unworthy of you, Robert."

"I have no distrust of thee," throwing his arm round his shoulder affectionately, and speaking close to his ear; "we will blow up this rascally, oppressive, tyrannous parliament, and this base perjured Scotsman, and his spawn, and their spawn, and all who have had a hand in these cursed laws—blow them all upward to the skies. We will purge this land of these abominations—that we will."

Winter turned round and stared him in the face, as one looks at one suddenly seized with unexpected frenzy.

"Nay, I am not mad," said Catesby, withdrawing his arm, "the thing is easy enough; half-a-dozen resolute men, and we would blow this damned crew beyond the limits of the earth's sphere."

But Winter made no answer.

"In that place the mischief hath been done, and perchance, in that place God hath assigned them their punishment."

"Well, Winter speak—"

"It is true," began the other, who by this time was pale as death, "this would overturn the pyramid, and

root out the evil at once; the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic religion must be the inevitable consequence of such a convulsion; when all the leaders of the Protestant church party had perished, the way would be clear for us, but," and he shuddered, "this is an awful remedy."

"The nature of the disease requires sharp remedies," said Catesby, firmly.

"But yet consider, should it fail, with what new and unheard of obloquy should we cover the Catholic name: for ourselves I heed not, but the dishonour to our church! . . ."

"It shall not fail," said his friend, in the words and spirit of Macbeth's wife. "And when did successful rebellion ever miss of its reward, the approval and sympathy of mankind. This is a grand and noble enterprise, all others have been mere idle tampering with danger, but here, at one blow! One ten minutes' work, and all is over . . . the yoke broken from the shoulder, the fetters from the hands, and our church restored ascendant to her throne. The giant of the hosts of Israel pulled the temple and the wrangling nobles of Philistia, upon his head; but we will do better than that, Thomas, we will fling them up to the angry heavens, and live ourselves to enjoy our triumph."

Winter's heart was beginning to beat fast: the prospect of a final victory was intoxicating even to him, temperate and humane as he naturally was: and such a victory! over those whom he had accustomed himself to regard with all the contempt and bitterness engendered

ed by religious hatred; and by his abhorrence of
se, whom, according to the teachings of his church,
was accustomed to designate by the term heretic.

“The grand objection,” he said, after some moments’
sideration, “and the one that weighs with me, is,
t among so many guilty, false, and cruel, who
ll deserve the doom they are bringing upon
ar heads, so many innocent must necessarily suffer.
ve you thought upon the wide destruction you
about to scatter? How many domestic hearths
st be shattered, surrounded by the harmless com-
mer sort who are as guiltless of these barbarous
scutions as the babes unborn.”

“I have thought of that,” said Robert, while an ex-
ession of very great pain was visible on his counte-
nce. “I have consulted, Father Darcy—Garnet—
u know who I mean. It would be painful, no doubt,
ry painful to see the innocent share the doom of the
cent; but he has instructed me that in all important
terprises such accompanying accidents are inevi-
ble. He instanced the sacking of a town, or a signal
story in arms. All great actions, he observed, would
ll to the ground, did men too nicely consider them.
have his ghostly word for it that in this glorious deed
a shall go up absolved, nay, more than justified, in
e eye both of God and man. And besides, will it
t be the same to them all fifty years hence?”

Winter shook his head somewhat sorrowfully.

“And you are determined?”

“Nay,” said Catesby, “I have made only one vow
-alone, unassisted, unsupported, so help me all the

paradise of saints, I will do this thing. If there be not a friend on earth to share the toil and dare the peril—alone, like the old prophet of God, will I affront the danger, and succeed or perish in the attempt. Fare thee well, Winter. I could find in my heart almost to rejoice that thou didst refuse to go art and part with me in this—honest, dear Winter. Thou hast laboured long and well—this is too much to tax thy friendship with—but let me have thy secrecy and thy prayers.”

And rising up, he turned to go away; he was perfectly sincere in what he said; he ~~was~~ generous enough to rejoice in the failure of his attempt to win a confidante to his dangerous scheme in the man he loved—but his tone of affectionate sadness, so sincere and unaffected, went straight to the heart of his friend.

He rose, and embraced him, saying:

“Stay—that shall never be said—that Winter suffered his friend to seek danger alone. There’s my hand, Catesby—you say true—we must not inquire too curiously. That which my friend dares I am ready to dare. Command me as thou wilt—I am thine. If to victory, I will follow to swell the general voice which shall applaud thy courage and aid thy success. If to death, why let me share the gallows and the bloody knife with thee!”

One of those sudden revulsions of feeling—one of those sharp pangs of remorse—which visited him at intervals throughout those fearful days, shook Catesby, as Winter spoke these words; but he resisted the feeling with all his strength, and while the very pulses of life

seemed freezing with a strange horror, he returned in silence his embrace; and thus was this dreadful compact of affection sealed between them.

In this manner was the accomplished, the polished, the much loved and esteemed Thomas Winter, engaged to the fatal conspiracy.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Thus conscience does make cowards of us all.”

Shakspeare.

CATESBY at this time occupied a small obscure house which he had taken at Lambeth, pretty nearly opposite to the Parliament stairs.

Lambeth was then a scattered village, surrounded by fields, high hedges, and trees—and this house lay conveniently out of the way of observation. It may seem perhaps strange, that he should have planted himself so near the abode of the Archbishop, his detested adversary; but houses were so scattered, and many of them so lonely, that little observation was possible; and the last thing that would have entered into the heads of the government, would have been to search for the abode of any of the more rich and eminent Catholic gentry in so obscure a place.

Here he was joined by John Wright, of Plowlands in Holderness, who had already taken a part in the Essex rebellion. It is probable that Catesby had secured his co-operation, before applying to Thomas Winter. Wright was a man of harsh and coarse countenance, and of a rough temper; accounted the best swordsman of his time; ready for any enterprise;

little troubled with those questions of an unsatisfied science, which perplexed and tormented the rest.

In him, Catesby found at once, what men engaged in enterprises, desperate and fearful as his was, most prize: a somewhat stolid head, and ready hand. Easily led, yet enterprising when in action—he had ranged with this invaluable associate, that, leaving his home he then occupied, at Twigmore in Lincolnshire, he should betake himself to a place called Laporth, in Warwickshire, the property of Mr. Catesby, which would bring him into the centre of the Catholic gentlemen of that neighbourhood, all so closely connected with each other by ties of blood and similarity of views and interests.

The ways were so bad, and travelling, except in the most frequented roads, so difficult, that a hundred miles distance was a very serious obstruction to any thing like confidential intercourse.

These three gentlemen now sitting in a little dark parlour in Catesby's obscure lodging at Lambeth, discoursed of what was next to be done.

The pale cheek and faded brow of Winter, bore testimony to the night of fearful doubt and agony which he had passed; his mind divided by contending feelings, and his imagination filled with images of sad and horror.

The once fresh and pleasant blue eye was dim and faded; the cheerful smile exchanged for a look of growing anxiety. While Wright, hard and indifferent, spoke as men accustomed to warfare speak of an expected battle. And Catesby, whose resolute temper,

had triumphed already in great measure, over those gentle weaknesses and tendernesses of nature which still disturbed his companion, spoke as of a thing necessitated by destiny, in the carrying out of which he considered himself but as a passive instrument.

Winter hesitating, as men do whose nature revolts at the action in which they are about to be engaged, discovered innumerable difficulties.

Where were they to find a house from whence to carry out the mine? Who was to be engaged in the labour—the very noise consequent upon which must attract the attention of the neighbourhood, and speedily lead to a discovery.

Catesby read in his friend's trembling, hesitating voice, and changing colour, the agonies of his irresolution—the remorse of his conscience—and comprehended the strength of that friendship for himself, which could lead him into an engagement evidently abhorrent to him.

“Let us make the attempt only,” he said; “we shall have satisfied conscience and honour by having done our best to redeem our suffering brethren. If the first commencement fail—we will pass no further.”

Wright nodded assent.

Winter still looked anxiously irresolute, and from time to time a shudder passed over him, while Catesby stood a few moments looking steadily at his friend.

Fallen as he was, he was not yet so utterly lost to right and generous feeling as to contemplate the action he meditated without repugnance, or the misery of his friend (thus debating with a conscience

that would not and could not be satisfied) without sympathy.

They had been all three standing round a small table, and speaking low to one another.

Catesby said at last:

“ You are right, Thomas, this is an awful exertion of the divine justice, nor ought it to be attempted till every other means has failed. We will leave no peaceable and quiet way untried. The constable Velasco is now in Flanders, awaiting the time to cross over to England, in order to conclude this peace between the rival powers of England and Spain. A conjunction which bodes us little good I fear, yet still let all fair means be tried.

“ It is for thy sake,” added he, going up to Winter, and laying his hand affectionately upon his shoulder. “ I see thine honourable heart yet revolts at these dark and hidden courses, to which my spirit has been broken and brought down. It were better, far better done, in the way of open and honourable dealing.”

“ Oh, Robert! and without such fearful massacre,” said Winter, and again he shuddered.

“ Thou shalt yet try thy hand at negotiation, Thomas, though as yet we have been unlucky enough in such things: but thou shalt cross the seas once more, wilt thou? See this constable; beseech him to solicit his majesty upon his coming here that the penal laws may be repealed, and we admitted to the privileges of our fellow citizens.”

Winter shook his head doubtingly, but his countenance cleared, as he said:

"I accept the mission with joy. Be it as you say—let *nothing* be left first untried."

"And if every thing, after being tried, fail," said John Wright, roughly—"then are we to pursue our purpose? or are we to let that die away in a few old wives' scolding words, as so many noble enterprises have evaporated before now? We have had flashes in the pan often enough," he added, with a hoarse sort of laugh—"I am for an explosion at last."

Catesby glanced at him, and then said:

"Let us understand each other, Thomas Winter. Should this negotiation with the constable fail, what am I to expect as to your purpose? Shall this noble plot go on—shall one generous effort be made to rend asunder our chains at once and for ever, or shall we lie down like felons and die in our fetters?"

"Catesby," said Winter, "you have my pledge. I thank you for this concession to my feelings—this last attempt, and the necessary delay. I only repeat what I said yesterday—where thou leadest I will follow—where thou dost triumph, I will glory—and where thou diest I will die."

Catesby wrung his hand—and again an expression of mingled tenderness and remorse passed over his face. It was this extreme susceptibility of feeling, added to the determined resolution of his temper, which gave this extraordinary man such strange power over the affections of all around him.

"There is a gentleman," he went on, resuming the subject, in a few seconds with perfect tranquillity—"whom we are all more or less well acquainted with: a

brave and gallant soldier, and well able for this business, Mr. Fawkes. You will meet with him in Flanders, Winter, for he is at present serving as a volunteer in the Archduke's army. That gentleman will serve our purpose well should our negotiations fail. Open the matter to him. Say there is much effectual work to do in England, and the bold heart and the ready hand are ours."

"He is a very religious and honourable gentleman," said Winter. "I know him well. But think you this dark and underground work will suit with his temper?"

"Fear it not," answered Catesby, "I know him too—a man determined in his purposes, and unflinching as to his means. There has been some practice in these Flemish wars—and gentlemen volunteers have learned, among other things, not to be chicken-hearted in the performance of their duties. He will see the scope of this business at once. Guido Fawkes will be one for such an enterprise, make you sure of it."

Again Winter sighed.

"I shall see him doubtless," he said. "I will set forward to-morrow. The wind sits fair for Dunkirk."

"The constable is now at Bergen, as I understand," continued Catesby—"in a week or two we may look for your return."

All this time Wright stood by eyeing the two friends in a wondering sort of manner—their susceptibility of feeling was quite a matter unintelligible to him; and to see Catesby appear to falter in his purpose, after the

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John Wright's sword is at

And so saying, he went
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"Father Darcy would he
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"His, or mine—it's the
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wanted in England ; that an honourable enterprise for the relief of the suffering Catholics is afoot, and calls for the services of brave and gallant men. Say no more—we will proceed no further in this till you return.”

Such were his hesitations.

CHAPTER VII.

“ There in its centre, a sepulchral lamp
Burns the slow flame, eternal—but unseen;
Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
Though vain its ray as it had never been.”

Byron.

WINTER has sailed to Flanders, and Catesby is at Dry Stoke, with his dearest friend Everard, for Everard is the man he loves best of all.

His mind, under the reaction following those desperate sentiments and fiery purposes which had agitated him, had sunk into a melancholy which led him to seek that abode of peace and affection; and, with his usual carelessness of others, to endeavour in the tenderness of Eleanor to find relief from the horrible excitement of thought under which he had been labouring.

He asked himself no questions, still less did he inquire how far his uncertain and capricious pursuits were inflicting injury upon her. He knew that she loved him; and under the restless misery of his own distracting thoughts, and with that desire of relief at any cost, which resembles the raging thirst of fever, he came to her in search of it. Evelyn and Everard were both struck with the change that has taken place in him. It has been coming on by degrees for the last two years, it is true; but never has it been so evident as now that the fiery impatience and almost capricious intemperance of his character had disappeared; he was no

longer abrupt, animated and energetic, as of old; he was quiet, grave, and gloomy, and nothing in the sweet retirement of Dry Stoke seemed to soften him. But to Eleanor this change was ecstasy.

In spite of the contemptuous manner in which he had spoken of her to Winter, what heart of man, when "the days of darkness come on, and the hours in which it shall be said there is no pleasure in them," can resist the solace of a woman's affection, especially when it is lavished as this was by the too incautious girl, heedless, nay, hopeless, of an equal return.

To have him sit by her, as he now constantly did; even though, absorbed in his own dark thoughts, his face averted and resting upon his hand, he never uttered a word for hours; was happiness enough for her.

Their humours sympathised indeed strangely; if he was gloomy, she was serious and sad, and a sorrowful foreboding of evil hung over her spirits; she asked no questions of herself; she felt as if the future was all one shadowy twilight, through which strange spectres were gliding; but what mattered it? her devoted woman's heart was satisfied, he had sought her—he was by her side—it was enough.

The cheerfulness of that pleasant home, which had been animated by the bright spirit of Evelyn, was indeed at an end. The anxiety which visited every Catholic hearth under the present aspect of political affairs, was felt more peculiarly here. They were both of them, both Everard and his Evelyn, sensibly alive to the sorrows and sufferings of others; and though their own position rendered the heavy fines which seemed to

be threatened a matter of comparative indifference, they could not look without anguish on the suffering preparing for so many, or without dismay upon the dangers which surrounded themselves. For by this time, it is proper to state, those severe measures announced by Catesby had begun to be carried into execution; the offensive visitation of private houses again became general, and the fines for recusancy were levied with a severity which threatened to plunge the poorer members of the society into utter ruin; for not only was all hope of remission for the future taken away, but the arrears for the past, which had been allowed to accumulate, were now exacted with the utmost rigour; and to increase the indignation of the party thus betrayed, the unfortunate victims were handed over by the king as a sort of present to his Scottish followers, who exercised their power in the most oppressive and pitiless manner. A law, too, was promulgated, forbidding private families to employ the service of a Catholic tutor in the education of their children.

Where were any members of the party to seek for the consolations of their religion? Who were to educate their children? The penal laws against the priests, the terrible enactments against private worship, which had slumbered in Queen Elizabeth's time, were hanging over all, and, as the king's proclamations led them to believe, were to be carried out in their utmost severity—it was forbidden either to send their children abroad, or to have a tutor of their own persuasion at home.

Of the seminaries abroad, Everard, it is true, had not much opinion; but the law which forbade the Catholic

families to select for themselves those to whom they would entrust their children, was cruel in the extreme.

Everard, endowed by nature with a reflecting mind and most feeling temper, pondered over these things in bitterness of spirit, while the society of Robert, with whom he had been accustomed to discuss such interests in the confidence of friendship, afforded him little or no consolation.

Absorbed in the contemplation of that vast secret, of which he did not give the remotest suspicion to his friend, he was reserved in speaking upon such subjects to a degree, which astonished as much as it mortified Digby.

Evelyn in the midst of all her anxieties would smile at times and say cheerfully to her husband, "Depend upon it he is in love, he is subdued at last; our sweet Eleanor has played the conqueror."

"You women understand these things better than we do," was her husband's reply, "but I tremble for Eleanor. Robert deeply resents the wrongs of himself and his party; he seems to find a certain want of sympathy in me, though heaven knows I feel these things bitterly enough; but Eleanor responds to every feeling of his in his own way; it is the flattery of affection—the sweetest of flatteries—such as you administer to me, sweet wife—but perhaps not without danger to our Eleanor."

Fabian was of the same opinion.

The jester was no longer a jester—the anxieties of the times had extended even to him; no one now was ready to listen to his drolling—no heart light enough

to engage in the playful strife of repartee. His own heart, too, was sinking with him, for he, like the rest—like all, had friends—had, through those friends, to suffer—

He had an aged father with small means, a mother sick and infirm, two sisters whom he tenderly loved, and all trembling under what was impending. Should these arrears for recusancy, as it was threatened, be exacted rigorously from them, they must all be irretrievably ruined. The little stipend a jester received, his fool's coat, his cap, and no longer tinkling bells, would be all they could call their own. He was a close observer, as has been said, and was accustomed to read those small indications by which the real tendencies of the character and inclinations are best perhaps discovered.

Fabian silent and musing, as he wandered about the terraces and orchards of the gardens at Dry Stoke, observed and reflected upon the situation of these two, now scarcely ever separated; he remarked the fleeting, hectic colour of Eleanor, and the dark thoughtful countenance of Robert.

“No, madam,”—it was no longer madonna, in his old playful familiar way—“it's not love, depend upon it.”

He still retained so much of his vocation—this sort of humble friend of her youth—it may be seen, as to venture upon subjects on which no other of his rank would have been allowed to touch.

“No, madam, it's not love; love, as I have heard, is,

“‘A thing made up of sighs and tears,
That lives upon a smile for years.’

I never heard Robert Catesby sigh—no, not once—though the sweet Eleanor sighs maybe enough for two. I wish that day had never come in the calendar,” he added, “that brought Sir Everard and Robert Catesby acquainted.”

“Why so?” said she, not choosing to acknowledge how truly she shared in a feeling—perhaps, unjust.

“Madam, there is in that man’s countenance, what our great poet says of the lean and hungry Cassius. There used to be a vast deal of pother and smoke as I thought without great flame, and perhaps not much real heat. It’s now a fiery furnace smouldering under ashes, never believe me else. Why does he come here?”

“Why, indeed?” her heart responded.

“You see, madam—there are troubles hanging over us all: but you and Sir Everard are just and righteous people, and the wise medium chosen by your father and poor old Mr. Warner is the path you have selected for yourselves: that must be a bad government indeed, which would disturb such peaceable subjects—so long as your noble husband can be kept clear of those dangerous intrigues in which too many lose themselves, and pull down ruin not only upon their own heads, but upon those of others” and he sighed. “But to enter such a paradise of peace! . . . Hark ye how the birds are singing this pleasant morning, and the flowers sending up their incense to God; listen to your pretty children on the terrace below—look out upon the pleasant hills; all this is sweet, let man rage as he will—your lines have been laid in pleasant places. Why does that dark and turbulent man come here?”

"He will not disturb us in our paradise," said she, endeavouring to shake off the strange foreboding of evil which oppressed her, "he and my husband talk little of affairs now, Fabian; Mr. Catesby is grown melancholy, reserved, and silent; Sir Everard and I scarcely speak of any but the most general matters—this subject is too painful to them both."

"The less the better," said Fabian; "and were it not well to warn that fair maiden, that men may be false and maids heart-broken?"

"I will speak to her," said Evelyn.

"Nay, my Eleanor, do not frown at me—do not look so displeased at your true friend. Have a care, sweet Eleanor, his company is too dangerous to your peace."

"My peace," said she, in a hollow voice, which told as a sort of passing knell, of the dire havoc made by passion unrequited, yet unresisted in her bosom, "don't speak to me of peace, Evelyn,—my heart is his—my being is his—I am his slave. When he allows me in humble duty to attend his pleasure, then only have I a moment's ease. It is too late: time was, when to fly might have been safety, but it is now too late: yet blame me not—I cannot tell you—I had wished—I desired to strive—I have striven against this fatal weakness—but—but—"

"Sweet sister, it is not yet too late; leave this place, trust yourself not in his dangerous presence; go to Harroden — go to Goddeshurst — any thing — any

here—but shun him, for he is destructive to your race.”

“He loves me not, you think, my Evelyn,” said she, mournfully, “I know that—do not believe my fond anxiety deceives me; he loves me not—he never did—he never can. But he is wretched; my presence soothes him; and let me die as I have wished so often to die, so I may minister to him.”

“My sweet one, this is a strange idol that you have created; this man is strong of heart, he is sufficient to himself; your sweet ministrations are thrown away; his thoughts are far from us all.”

“I know it—I know it—his thoughts are with his flowing church and with the suffering fathers of that church; he is not like the rest of us, Evelyn; there is peace in Robert’s heart when others are wronged.”

“I know not how that may be,” said the young man, “but there is one I know of, too, who never sees wrong, without the tender desire to relieve it—”

“And I know one who never sees wrong, without a noble resolution to revenge it.”

“Ah, that revenge! When—when will there be peace? Never, while all are so prompt to revenge, and so few patient to endure. ‘Why do you not suffer wrong patiently?’ was what Mr. Warner used to say; but from his lips there were always flowing sweet words of calmness and content. I do not know what is become of all that now,” said poor Evelyn, “I never hear such sweet sentences from any one now.”

CHAPTER VIII.

"Though some of you, with Pilate, wash your hands,
 Showing an outward pity; yet you Pilates
 Have here deliver'd me to my sour cross,
 And water cannot wash away your sin."

Richard II.

DRESSED like a travelling gentleman of some condition, his servant being the unhappy man called Owen, or by some little John,—Mr. Darcy, Whalley, Roberts, Farmer, Garnet, for such was the list of names under which he passed himself at different times, arrived one morning at Dry Stoke. It was now the end of April, and the return of Winter from the Netherlands was daily expected.

Mr. Darcy, as you by this time very well know, was a man of wide spreading intrigues and extended views,—one who never neglected any means however remote or insignificant, which might by any possibility forward his purposes; one of these, it long had been, to gain favour with Evelyn, to confuse the clear perceptions of her understanding, and to overcome the repugnance she at first nourished against himself and his party.

The provincial, with his accustomed sagacity, had perceived the influence that the clear-sighted head, and cheerful, affectionate heart of his wife exercised over Everard; and how necessary it was to captivate her good opinion, if he were to be master of his.

Nothing could be further removed than was Mr.

Darcy's present manner from any thing that men have been usually accustomed to associate with the idea of an intriguing catholic priest of those days. Frank, cheerful, and affectionate, his conversation most easy and engaging, he won his way to the heart by the attraction of his gentleness; and certainly there was something irresistibly pleasing in the tranquillity and repose of Mr. Darcy's countenance. While every one around with the exception of Everard, breathed nothing but murmurs or threats, he preached invariably of peace. He exhorted to that same gospel peace which Evelyn had been accustomed to hear advocated by her venerated Mr. Warner.

He sat by her in the large withdrawing room, where she was at work; the window was open, and looked out upon the terrace, where Catesby, his arms folded, was walking in moody silence, while Eleanor, sitting with Everard on a bench under a large elm tree, watched him anxiously. Everard was, as usual, engaged in reading, his little boy sitting upon his lap; the head of the child covered with its beautiful curling hair, nestling in his bosom.

Evelyn let fall her needle, and was gazing at the group.

Mr. Darcy's eyes were turned the same way.

"It reminds me," he said, as if addressing her thoughts, "of pictures I have seen at Rome. The rare masters in Italy have realised beauty in a way which escapes our more literal painters; the beauty of that group however, would require no addition of this kind, it is all-sufficient; whether we regard the pure outline

of the father's countenance, the ineffable beauty of the cherub child, or the sweet maiden with the troubled eye that sits beside them; or contrast it, if contrast be wanted, with the dark countenance of that extraordinary being, whose restless spirit was never intended to trouble this peaceful Eden."

She looked at him with some surprise.

"I understood that Mr. Catesby had the honour of the Father Provincial's friendship and esteem."

"Perhaps, you should rather say, admiration, lady: yes, doubtless, I do admire Mr. Catesby: there is something in indomitable force, that all men, even men of peace, cannot but admire—there is that in the headlong torrent, the roaring tempest, the surging sea, that all men admire in trembling—but esteem! No," turning his eyes to the peaceful group beneath the elm tree, "I have been reared under the teaching of a school which enjoins love, gentleness, forgiveness—and promises in return that peace which passeth understanding. With spirits such as these, I would fain have alone to do."

Evelyn respected his abilities, and estimated his authority as a man high in office in her church, and among her party; but she had been led by what she had heard from her father, and Mr. Warner, to suspect the Jesuits of fomenting all sorts of dangerous and treasonable intrigues, and of encouraging the vengeful and violent feelings of party in every way: to hear these sweet words of peace and conciliation fall from his lips, was an unexpected comfort. She had fancied that some new scheme might be in agitation: her anxiety was relieved: she turned upon him her clear blue eye, with

an expression that at once assured him that he had made the impression he intended ; the ingenuous young creature was too sincere of heart herself, to gauge the unfathomable depths of his duplicity.

“ I have ever preached patience,” he continued, quietly, “ and in times far worse than the present, but there are spirits to whom such doctrine is most unsavoury. That proud and dauntless spirit chafes under the idea of submission to evils, at present past remedy. He will not possess his soul in patience ; he understands not the wisdom of biding the time ; and the commands and injunctions of his ghostly advisers on this head irritate, instead of subduing his soul ; but patience, sweet lady,” with a kind, indulgent smile, “ this passion proceeds but from the excess of a bold nature, and let Mr. Catesby but once be convinced that a peaceable course is the best to be adopted for his unhappy church and her suffering children, and a man of his deep sense of piety, will not be slow to adopt it.”

“ Are such the commands of his ghostly advisers ? ” she asked in a dubious, hesitating manner.

“ Doubt it not, lady,” and he drew from a concealed pocket of his riding dress some papers, which contained the injunctions of the pope and Father Parsons and the superior of the Jesuits abroad, that peace should be preserved, and the government adhered to. It was true these had been issued at the time when the holy father had but too much reason to believe that it was the intention of James really to become what he had once signed himself, *Beatitudinis vestræ obsequentissimus filius* : how far plans were changed since the obsequious child had

become so recalcitrant, he did not think it necessary to inform her.

She began to call herself to account for the unjust suspicions she had harboured against the holy fathers of St. Ignatius: for here was the principal of the society in England, in secret correspondence with the authorities at Rome, and their letters breathed nothing but patience, resignation, and Christian peace.

Evelyn seemed to breathe more freely; she took up the papal brief in her hand, and reverently kissed it; then turning to Mr. Darcy with a more open and confiding expression of countenance than he had ever met with in her before, she said:

“And do you think, reverend father, that your authority and influence will be sufficient to diffuse this best of spirits among us?”

“I have not the slightest doubt of it. The authority confided to me—unworthy—by the church, is supreme in this country; and much as they may regret the course I adopt, they will none of them dare to resist my commands. Therefore let your gentle spirit rest, Lady Digby. Whatever you may observe, however restless and discontented the Catholic gentlemen around us may appear, be assured on my priestly word that no scheme whatsoever is in agitation among them (‘with which I am not acquainted’, mentally). And that I will invariably resist, as it is my duty to do, every seditious purpose of every sort against the government, (‘unless I approve of it’).”

She took up his hand, and under a sudden emotion of fervent gratitude, pressed it with reverence to her lips.

low I have wronged you," she said, with simplicity.

"Have you?" said he, with an indulgent smile; "blame not yourself, sweet Lady Digby, for a mistake in judgment which you share with many. It is my misfortune to be little understood; but praise is not of men, but of God.

"I believe," he continued, "that much of that which has been done in secret carried on, and which I deeply disapprove, and ever have resisted, has been laid at my door.

But this is indifferent to me; my vocation is made true through good report and evil report, the sole purpose for which I am sent here—the salvation of the suffering members of Christ's church. And yet humanity is great, and the desire of a good name, the weakness that clings to the heart. Other things are foregone for this cause; but the esteem of the good and virtuous I would still retain—it is my infirmity—I thank you for your restored good opinion." "It is a noble infirmity," said his companion.

"It is nobler even to vanquish that," was his answer.

"and yet in one view it is better I should be stood by those whose purposes are righteous and noble as my own. We should be fellow-workers in this cause; and believe me, there is much to be

A tall, dark figure of Catesby crossed the window spoke.

"The fearful angel of the Apocalypse," said the Jesuit, "yet let not Dry Stoke banish him from its

pleasant halls. He loves your husband ; and the sweet influences of the Lady Evelyn, and those of the fairest of maidens, will allay the storm that rages within. You must accustom him to love this place, lady, and Robert Catesby will learn to love peace and righteousness for your sakes; and to forget those dangerous purposes, and those vain attempts which have agitated him, and through him, all of us so long. It is written—the church—the woman of the seven radiant stars shall be driven for a time into the wilderness. The punishment for our sins, no doubt. It is our part to submit.”

“ I thought,” said she, hesitating, “ a different lesson had been taught some few years ago.”

“ That heretical woman was excommunicated,” said he, in a tone of awe; “ to such an one we dare not preach submission — obedience to the holy father forbids it. But this king is not excommunicated — there is no longer any difficulty in reconciling our duties.”

So much for the Lady Digby.

Thus it was, as Catesby and Mr. Darcy rode the next morning towards Harroden Magna, which they intended to take, Catesby on his way to London to meet Winter and Mr. Fawkes, Darcy on one of his progresses.

They were riding through the deep solitary lanes together, and at such a distance from their servants that they could not be overheard; no occasion could be more favourable for confidential discourse.

"I marvel at you," was Darcy's reply to what Robert Catesby had last said; "at these hesitations and uncertainties in a man of your resolution. I thought you had been made of sterner stuff, and possessed a bolder, not to say braver spirit."

"I would do much for the cause," said Catesby, with a sorrowful gravity which was now becoming habitual to him; "I would peril my life, my estate, my posterity. The injuries we have endured have eaten like iron into my soul, and to punish this base king and his profligate sycophant ministers, I would risk all. But this is a fearful business: in the heat of passion it seemed to me but a light thing—but in the calm reflection of Dry Stoke, it has assumed the form of a hideous spectre."

"No unusual effect of quiet and green trees," said the Jesuit, somewhat contemptuously; "with some men I have observed this kind of chameleon turn of mind—coloured by every accident of the moment. It is not so with me—what I esteemed just and right, and appropriate to the time, yesterday, I esteem so to-day, and shall do to-morrow. I cannot learn to be less sensible of the wrongs, or more deaf to the groans of the miserable and oppressed—because the blackbirds and thrushes happen to sing sweetly at Dry Stoke. I do not think a wicked government and an heretical ascendancy less monstrous evils—because the cows are lowing as peaceably in the meadows, and the sheep bleating as quietly under the trees, as if this were a world in which violence and wrong were unheard of. No, Mr. Catesby, such is not in my temper—and there-

fore you must pardon me for not sympathising with it in others."

"But the means," said Catesby, gloomily—"I have never discoursed to you of the means—I want your ghostly comfort and your spiritual counsel as to the means—I feel that I do: my soul is all at war with itself."

"I have already told you, Mr. Catesby, that a man of peace—such as I profess myself to be—has nothing to do with the means by which contests against wrongs are maintained; that matter is in the province of those whose profession it is to wield arms. I have begged you more than once to arrange your plans as may best suit with your knowledge of such things—things of which I hold myself, and choose to hold myself, ignorant. I am not like that militant bishop of whom the story runs—but *were* such my profession," he added, "I hope I should not be found wanting either in spirit or perseverance to carry out well-advised plans—I trust a little natural horror at bloodshed would not be suffered to arrest my hand when it was raised to rescue many suffering and innocent from the gripe of the oppressor—I trust the cowardly whispering of an irresolute temper would not be allowed to ruin any good cause committed to me."

"I may be a coward," said Catesby, with the careless indifference of one who knows of that he could not be suspected: "I may have a womanly repugnance to shedding blood—I confess it is so when my own blood is not up—but this plan of mine . . . it haunts me . . . it is a scheme so fearful—and yet so grand—so effectual!—insuring the restoration of the Catholic church in Eng-

land—the deliverance perhaps of all Europe from heresy—the destruction of so many worthless tyrants at a blow!—Every thing seems so certain, so inevitable, a consequence of the enterprise—yet my mind is harassed by uncertainties—so many innocent must perish with the guilty.”

“Do you suppose when the walls of Jericho fell before the blast of the trumpet—that the innocent did not perish with the guilty?”

“But that was by the express command of God—in his hand are the issues of life,” said Catesby.

“And is there no voice of God yet sounding upon earth, to issue his commands—think you, young man—If the too often erring church in the wilderness had its Urim and its Thummin, on which the commands of the Most High were inscribed; think you his glorious church of Christ shall be left without a testimony? I tell you, Mr. Catesby, that there is a voice yet sounding throughout all lands and demanding the obedience of all Christian men—and I think it would be well to see men listen to that voice, instead of parleying with and asking questions of their own ill-instructed minds.”

They rode on a little further, and then the priest, in a solemn voice, said—

“Robert Catesby, listen to that voice through me, her appointed messenger. Go forward, and that which is in thine heart, *do*.”

“But you cannot guess at what is in my heart?” said Robert. “I defy mortal man to imagine the monstrous thing that is in my heart. If it were allowed me to consult with a ghostly father—to consult with you!”

“ I have already said,” answered Darcy, with some impatience, “ that with the means I have nothing to do—it does not become me to enter into consultation upon that which is so totally foreign to my habits of mind. I can enlighten you as to principles—and upon that head the subject does not admit of a question. But I have said enough: I would rather you sought assurance from other hands. Seek the proper remedy; go to confession; go to Tesmond, he is lying somewhere about London; to Gerard, to any of them. Open your heart before them: if they absolve you not, *then* let me hear of you again. By this time Mr. Winter will have returned from abroad—but take one counsel with you, Mr. Catesby; whatever you determine upon, confide your secret to few. Be resolved, be silent, be speedy—and rely upon it the matter once well begun, your priests and your party will take heed for the rest.”

They were mounting the hill which led to Harroden. It was long since Robert had passed that way: never since the fatal morning which had separated him from Grace Vaux for ever: he had never seen her since then.

Deep ineffaceable regret, mingled, as all his feelings were, with a bitter and passionate resentment, had forbade him even to mention her name. He never inquired for her; he knew not well whether she were living or dead; abroad or in England.

But now he lifted up his head, and with a melancholy gravity gazed upon that well-known place: the Jesuit followed his eye, and answered to the expression of his countenance.

"There is one—a holy virgin saint on earth, to whom it will be glad tidings that Robert Catesby hath devoted himself to the deliverance of his fellow-sufferers," said he.

Robert started, and changed colour.

"Her prayers will rise to heaven for so holy an enterprise; her tears will wash away the traces of blood and purify the deed; her agony of thanksgiving will and shall sound in your ears; when such a deed is done—and by you."

"By me!—No, no, she has forgotten me."

"Forgotten you!—But it was not my doing—and that cheek is wan and colourless, and those dark eyes dimmed with many tears . . . it was not my doing—but remains to console her for the sacrifice, but the triumph of that cause to which she has devoted her life. No, aye, one thing, and one alone, can repay to Grace Vaux the hours of anguish which have desolated her life."

"You do not mean . . ."

"She loved you, Catesby, then—she loved you even the moment of her righteous self-sacrifice—she took the bitter cross, and hath borne it ever since. Comfort her, sir—teach her to glory in him for whom she long hath sorrowed. Restore a holy joy to that torn and desolate mourner, and when you have redeemed the captivity of Zion—come to Grace Vaux for your reward."

They were at the gates, and here they parted; the knight rode in, and Catesby pursued his way to Welborough.

CHAPTER IX.

“ ‘ Brief then; and what’s the news ?’

‘ Oh, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night,
Black, fearful, comfortless, and horrible.’ ”

King John.

CATESBY rode to his old lodging at Lambeth, and dismounting, found Mr. Winter already arrived, and accompanied by the gentleman whom he had himself invited over—Mr. Fawkes.

The two gentlemen were sitting in the small back room; Winter leaning on the window-seat, and looking upon the view, it would seem, which was rendered beautiful by the abundance of fine trees in the neighbourhood. It was now the month of May, and this year in all her glory. The cheerful sun was careering through the glad heavens, and tinting every leafy branch, as it fell upon the fresh, yellow, transparent oak-leaves, and the green softness of the young beech branches; birds were singing in every brake, and the fields were yellow with king cups, and spangled with crocuses and daisies.

Nature in all her wealth, as poured out by the great and beneficent father, was spread before him—and man! Alas for the mystery of iniquity, which renders what should have been the prime ornament of this beautiful creation a blot, and a scandal, and a deformity, and a misery!

Mr. Fawkes was a tall, spare man, of a lofty, military carriage, with high features and dark complexion, and an expression of stern gravity. Trained among the Spanish bands, then esteemed the first soldiers of Europe, and associated with those stern and pitiless fanatics who had fought with Pizarro and Cortes in the new world, and under the ruthless Alva in the old, he was deeply imbued with religious impressions of the darkest and most unmitigated character; and habituated to carry out every most barbarous measure of war, not only as an act of military necessity, but as a religious offering to the glory of God, in thus avenging him upon his enemies. Unsoftened by any of those gentler touches of nature which visited the rest, but which he, reared in camps, had never known, he was still a brave, and in a certain view, an honourable man, ready to sacrifice life and liberty upon the altar of religion or military duty. Such was Guido Fawkes; who now in this fatal hour came—with his unflinching sense of military duty, his unmodified detestation of heresy, his pitiless indifference as to means, acquired in that dire contest to which he had been habituated—to infuse a fresh element of resolute, unflinching, persevering determination into the hearts of his brother confederates. It is more than possible that the compunctious visitings of the others might otherwise have availed to defeat the horrible design.

Fawkes was as yet ignorant of the precise nature of the attempt contemplated; he had only heard from Mr. Winter that a great scheme was in agitation, and that his assistance was wanted by his friends among the

Catholic gentlemen in England. He had already been connected with Winter, Catesby, and all those engaged in the Spanish intrigues, and had, in the capacity of a sort of emissary, on their account, visited Madrid. Though serving under the Spaniard, his heart was still with his own country; his desire to see her rescued from that deadly heresy with which she was overspread, intense; and his contempt for the present government equalled that of any of the others.

Dressed in a plain suit, his hat without feather or jewel, his large military boots, black leathern belt and long Spanish sword, bespeaking his profession and giving a peculiar character to his appearance—he was walking up and down the little apartment, his face severe and serious, and apparently engaged in thought; utterly insensible, as appeared, to all those sweet charms of the morning let in by the open window, while the gentler Winter, leaning on the window sill, inhaled the air that played upon his cheek, with a melancholy pleasure.

The conversation of Mr. Fawkes had however already exercised considerable influence over his mind. Unconscious himself of the astounding nature of the scheme to a share in which he was invited, he unfortunately was not withheld, by a sort of natural horror which the others had found irresistible, and which even he could not have altogether escaped—from insisting in the strongest terms upon the necessity and duty of resistance against the heretical government of their common country.

His mind in fact pictured a general rising throughout

the kingdom, like that of the North in Queen Elizabeth's days; he had not the slightest suspicion of the real nature of the enterprise resolved upon.

Catesby now entered: he, too, was a tall and lofty figure, and his countenance was strong and energetic; but how different were these two conspirators from each other.

The one a gloomy, bigoted fanatic, with few ideas, and those of the most uncompromising nature. The other, of a mind all genius and intelligence, and of a sensibility the most acute—a questioner of all things; doubting, hesitating, agitated by those doubts which will perplex a man capable of viewing a question in all its bearings; yet, once resolved, as daring in his contempt of means as the old war-hardened veteran of the Spanish bands.

The door opens—see Catesby enter; see Fawkes turn round in his walk, stride along the floor, and lock the hand of the other in his iron grasp. Both men had the highest esteem for each other; the energy and resolution of their characters, were understood by a sort of mute sympathy.

“You are welcome to England, Mr. Fawkes,” said Catesby; “I did not deceive myself in my impression that when a gallant enterprise was on foot, we might depend upon your co-operation—but what news from the Spaniard, Winter?” as Mr. Winter rising from his seat, came forward, “may we find reason to hope that our object can be attained peaceably under the protection of a friend, such as his majesty of Spain hath ever proved to the English Catholic?”

“His majesty of Spain is no longer the great and resolute Philip, son of Charles,” said Mr. Fawkes, “the unsparing adversary of heresy, and advocate of Christ’s church and the glory of God, by fire and sword.”

“The English Catholics must look around for another friend,” said Winter. “I saw the constable as you desired, Catesby; I met with abundance of fine courtesies, but I could not even obtain good words—cheap as that commodity usually is in the mouths of statesmen. Assurances of good will, if those be good words, I had, but his reliance upon his majesty, King James’s justice and clemency, it seems is such, that he cannot do better for his Catholic friends, in England, than recommend them to the tender mercy of their own sovereign.”

Fire flashed in the eye of Catesby, but he suppressed any demonstration of feeling.

“I understand,” said he, after a few seconds of reflection; “what the Spaniard desires, at present, is peace with this country; and the Catholics, bound hand and foot, are to be thrown into the king’s hands as an earnest of his good faith! But what said the Archduke? you saw him?”

“Much the same; he acknowledged that his government was so desirous of peace, that nothing which could in any way retard the impending negotiations could be listened to. He exhorted us to patience, and enlarged upon the excellent disposition of our new king.”

“Humph,” said Catesby.

Then turning away and addressing Fawkes,

“It is well—we must henceforward rely upon ourselves.”

“Upon ourselves, and the mighty arm of God, the avenger,” was the reply.

“Mr. Catesby,” continued Fawkes, “you have long known my thoughts in this matter; I ever mistrusted these pacific measures, this temporizing with atheists and heretics. There is but one way—I have ever believed—to deal with the enemies of God: the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.”

A strange mysterious expression stole over the countenance of Catesby as he spoke,

“When a town is beleaguered,” he said, “men first make a breach in the defences, and then they draw the sword—is it not so? There may be certain measures necessary before a general rising would be useful or possible: there may be measures which would render success certain, and failure impossible.”

“Whatever measures have suggested themselves to Mr. Catesby,” said Fawkes, with a soldierly sort of salute, such as men give to a superior officer, “I for one shall be ready to adopt them. My confidence in his talents and energy is unlimited; I am here to be as a mere arquebuse in his hands; a passive weapon of offence or defence, to be made use of as he shall instruct me.”

Catesby and Winter exchanged glances of satisfaction.

“Upon one principle my mind is made up,” continued Mr. Fawkes, “that every mode of warfare is le-

gitimate, employed in a cause so holy, and against an enemy so detestable, both in the eyes of God and man. When we war against powers and principalities, and the rulers of darkness in high places, any means are accounted justifiable—any species of offensive warfare, honourable.”

“ Mr. Fawkes, you do not disappoint the hopes I had entertained of you,” said Catesby, taking and pressing his iron hand once more, “ I thank you, sir. This,” he continued, “ is, however, a solemn business; we are on the eve of a great enterprise, undertaken at an enormous cost; let us begin it as Christian gentlemen and soldiers should. Bind ourselves by a sacred oath of secrecy, to be true and faithful to each other; and receive the blessed sacrament upon our promise to devote life and estate to this great purpose. After that, you shall be made acquainted with the plot, more in detail.”

He was interrupted by a low knock at the outer door. Bates opened it, and a gentleman was heard to enter the house; presently the door handle of the room in which they were assembled turned.

“ Come in, whoever you may be,” said Mr. Catesby.

The door opened, and Thomas Piercy appeared. He was a tall man with high cheek bones, hooked nose, and a strange and somewhat forbidding cast of countenance; his eyes somewhat prominent, rolled round in a disagreeable manner; and his hair being snow white, he had the appearance of a man older than he really was. He had not that courtly aspect which seem properly to have belonged to a kinsman of the noble Duke

of Northumberland, a gentleman pensioner of the guard, and frequenter of the court of Queen Elizabeth: there was something rough and abrupt in his tones and gestures, which contrasted unfavourably with the appearance either of Catesby or Winter. 'Honest Tom' the former was accustomed to call him; for he loved the downrightness of Piercy's character. A man, who never, to use the vulgar phrase, minced a matter; but spoke out and to the purpose, whatever that purpose might be.

After an exchange of the usual salutations, and a few inquiries had been made and satisfied as to the expectations that might be entertained with regard to assistance from the Spaniard—mingled with sundry expressions of contempt and dissatisfaction with respect to the conduct of both governments, but more especially their own:

"Well, gentlemen," said Piercy, in his usual abrupt manner, "are we always to talk and never to act? For myself, I could be well contented to execute justice myself upon this Scotch liar, who, not contented with compromising his own honour, has cast a stain upon mine, by showing me up as a betrayer of the interests of my own party, to whom I stood pledged for his scoundrel promises. What say you, Catesby? Shall execution be done? I would (touching the hilt of his poignard) as soon pass this dagger through his base Scotch heart, as cut the side of a venison pasty. What say'st thou, man? Shall execution be done? Speak, Robert Catesby, what art pondering on?"

"No, no, Tom"—said Catesby. "What's one man?"

His son would be ready to slip into the father's vacant chair, and say that vile renegade Cecil—say that married pretended bishop Bancroft, were made away with—think you numbers might not easily be found, members of a lying priesthood, or a debauched nobility—ready to carry on the system? No, no, Piercy, I have a better plan than that in this head of mine. So be it you are ready to join heart and hand, with a set of honest gentlemen whom oppression has rendered desperate, and who are determined upon revenge.”

“I am glad,” was Piercy's reply, “that the noble heart of Catesby rings true to his party and his country. Robert, I know thee well—whatever thou hast planned, will be above the common. I am thy slave thou knowest of old—my life I hold at a penny fee, my estate is but the younger son of a younger brother's inheritance, but were I the heir of Northumberland, I would peril all in any enterprise of thine. Thou knowest I would, Catesby—thou knowest that I love thee. Do what thou wilt with Piercy, his heart was ever thine, and his sword at thy command.”

“I may need more than thy sword, Piercy,” said Catesby, the dark expression again overcasting his countenance. “I may demand more than it can enter into thy heart to conceive. Take back thy words if they were pledged too hastily: for I shall tax thy friendship, it may be too far.”

“Were it to toil chained at the oar—or in the bowels of the earth, deep plunged in the darksome mine, I could do it for thee, Robert.”

“The *mine*!—ha!”

“Aye, like the poor Indian they tell of—for I am sunk in my own opinion, by thus having lent myself as bait to the trap which has caught my party; and any slavish part, so it be in the service of the cause, is only too good for Tom Piercy.”

Catesby crossed the room, seized his hand, and said—

“Let it be to-morrow then. To-morrow, gentlemen—you all know the lone house in the fields, at the back of St. Clement’s Inn, which our reverend fathers are wont to inhabit when in London. It is secret and secure—it has never been foiled by the least suspicion. At eleven o’clock to-morrow night, these streets may be securely traversed. There let us meet; Thomas, we have agreed for our mutual security, that before the purpose be revealed, an oath of secrecy shall be taken, and confirmed by the holy sacrament upon it. The reverend father in God, Gerard, acting under the authority of our Father Provincial, will be ready to administer the blessed mystery. At the back of St. Clement’s Inn then, and to-morrow, an hour before midnight.”

CHAPTER X.

“Oh, holy night! with what pure dignity
Walk'st thou thy vigil through the starry air;
When winds no longer whispering—breezes die,
And sleep and silence watch this world of care.”

ALL was profoundly still; not one single cloud obscured the deep serene of the immeasurable depths of air. The stars shining in all their glory spangled the mighty face of heaven, eternal eyes keeping watch over the slumbering world; not a breath was stirring, but every herb, and flower, and tree, were sleeping motionless in the dew of that most lovely night. Through the narrow lanes enclosed with high hawthorn hedges now in full bloom, and breathing sweetness; under the shade of the magnificent oaks and elms which shot their broad branches across the path, while the stars glittered and glistened in calm splendour above, and nature in all her glad beneficence breathed peace on earth beneath; these unhappy men, wrapped in their dark cloaks, were advancing separately with stealthy pace to the solitary house in the fields at the back of St. Clement's Inn, which had been agreed upon as the place of *rendez-vous*.

It was not without emotion that he, the prime leader, the Satan of this dread conspiracy,—looked above, and around, and received the painful, yet awful influences of the hour, upon his susceptible imagination.

Like that of his dread antitype, his eye showed

signs of remorse and passion—" and care sat on his faded cheek."

The soft influences of the hour fell upon him—all so peaceful, tranquil, and still—the very spirit of that ineffable love which fills the wide extended universe, diffusing itself on all things round.

And what a hell within his breast.

What a blast!—what a storm!—what a wild destruction!—what a massacre of guilty and innocent!—of hoary old age! vigorous manhood! virgin beauty and infant smiles! All within was a dreadful confusion of slaughter and crime; all without, reposing beauty and majestic order. As the stars, those mighty watchers, walked in their silent courses—while all the busy race of men lay sunk in silent repose.

He walked slowly along, wrapped from head to foot in the folds of his long Spanish cloak, and with the flap of his hat pulled low over his contracted brow; no longer with the bold, energetic bearing of the fearless Robert, but creeping stealthily along, with the footstep of the midnight assassin.

Oh, foul conspiracy!

From time to time he lifted up his eyes to where the pale and beautiful planet was slowly sinking in the west; at times he gazed upon the glittering wheels of the mighty northern wain slowly traversing the sky; on the glittering hosts of heaven, shining in uncounted numbers over head. Then mingling as in a dream, came over his spirit the vision of one clad in white robes

with long and flowing hair, and eye and gesture as of a seraph, and the innocent passion of those days of ardent resolution and sinless love seemed revived. He saw her, the loved, the lost; again he thought of a home rendered a holy paradise of love with her; again that dream of prattling voices, of music, woods, and breezy fields came over him; and then he recollected who he was, and for what purpose he came there, and his clenched fist struck against his breast as he strode rapidly onward to the fearful place of meeting.

It was a low obscure house, standing at the end of one of those deep, close lanes which were so narrow as only to admit the passage of a horse or beast of burden. It was surrounded on all sides by thickets of underwood which completely hid it from the eye of any one overlooking the country; and before it lay a small green with a little clear, sparkling brook running rapidly and glittering in the starlight; tall trees stood in the hedges, and overtopped the underwood around; and the voice of the screech owl like that of some one lamenting and crying for help, broke at intervals upon the ear. The rest was in perfect silence.

The door was fastened within; but at a well-known signal it was opened by a very ancient woman, dressed according to the country fashion of the day, but in whose appearance something quite unlike the usual character of a country woman's countenance might be detected; her features were high and delicate, her eye large and noble, and her cheek, faded as it was, still retained the traces of extraordinary beauty; there was something also in the disposition of her head gear which

reminded you of the religious orders, to one of which, like Mother Anne, she had in truth belonged.

At the dispersion she, like so many others in the same situation, had continued to live a recluse in the busy world to which she had been restored, and had, upon the arrival of the Jesuits and seminary priests upon the island, devoted herself to their service. The keeping these lone houses for their use was one in which they rendered great assistance to their party; their obscurity rendering them secure asylums to which they could retreat when any pressing search was made among the houses known to belong to the Catholic gentry.

Catesby saluted the ancient dame in silence, and entered. She closed the door noiselessly after him, and with his assistance, lifting a heavy bar, carefully adjusted the screw which fastened it.

When this was done,

“Father Gerard is here?” asked Catesby.

“Yes, sir.”

“And all things in readiness?”

“All.”

“The rest are come?”

“Four of them.”

“Right—where are they?”

She made a motion of her hand and pointed to a low door of black oak at the farther end of the small hall or entry; he advanced, and lifting up the latch entered the apartment. It was a small room, oak wainscotted, and without the slightest relief of ornament; at one side was a second arched door; in the centre of the room stood a heavy carved table on which lay a black bound

primer, on each side of which stood two candlesticks containing large holy candles such as are used in the solemn Catholic ceremonies, and a richly chased antique silver gilt cup filled with holy water.

Mr. Winter, Mr. Piercy, Mr. Wright, Mr. Fawkes, were already assembled, and stood in a sort of awe-struck expectation, leaning against the wall in different attitudes. Their tall figures (for Mr. Piercy and Mr. Fawkes were remarkably tall, and the other men above the ordinary size,) were wrapped in their long black cloaks, their large rapiers protruded, and their flapped and high-crowned Spanish hats were pulled over their eyes.

They looked, as in truth they were, like dark, midnight conspirators arrayed for some fearful design; and the grave expression of each gloomy countenance gave a certain awful solemnity to the scene, as the light from the two large candles fell in bright masses on their faces, leaving the remoter parts of the room in heavy shadow. Catesby, with a face from which the warm colour had long departed, and which was now of an ashy paleness, passed his hand to each one of the gentlemen in turns; he then walked to the low casemented window, shook it as if to examine the fastenings, and listened for a few seconds, but all was silent without; he could only hear the thick breathings of his companions.

He returned to the table; and taking up the primer, sprinkled it with holy water from the vase, and held it forward; and then, one by one, the conspirators approached the table, kneeled down, and Catesby administered the fearful oath of secrecy; each man received

it in his turn, laying his hand upon the primer, and then rising resumed his attitude of mute attention, leaning against the wall.

The ceremony over, Catesby took Piercy by the cloak, as did Wright and Winter by Fawkes, and in a low, whispering voice, rendered hollow and faltering by their emotions, revealed the dreadful purpose of the conspiracy.

Fawkes, it is believed, met the avowal with the greatest hardihood. Piercy, deeply offended as he was by the manner in which the king had treated him, and little accustomed to scruples, yet shuddered at the dreadful recital. He, like Winter, looked upon it at first with natural abhorrence, and it required much reasoning on the part of Catesby to reconcile him to the idea. The arguments used need not be repeated here; the sophistry of the casuists—belonging principally to the order of St. Ignatius, is accessible to all those who desire to learn for themselves, to what extent the perversion of holy things to unholy purposes has been carried.

Strange to say, Catesby, though he had himself required so much persuasion to reconcile his conscience to the commission of so fearful a crime, argued the matter with Piercy as earnestly as if his own convictions had never wavered. He succeeded in bringing him over to his wishes, partly by the effect of those maxims then at the service of any one who had reasons for blinding the human conscience, but more by the effect of his own extraordinary personal influence over his friends; who one and all agreed in assigning as the main reason for their entering into this accursed plot, the great love and reverence they bore to Mr. Catesby.

The assurance that the spiritual fathers whom he had consulted had approved of the scheme, and that one of them was at this very moment waiting in an adjoining room to administer the holy sacrament in confirmation of their purposes, had also very considerable effect in outweighing the scruples of Mr. Piercy.

In whatever manner convinced, it appears, however, as in the case of Winter, that once resolved, he was not again visited with misgivings upon the subject.

After about half-an-hour thus spent, the door at the further end of the room opened, and the droning voice of the serpent as the mass was about to begin, was heard. Led by Catesby and Winter, the gentlemen entered another small apartment, where a temporary altar was erected; the room was low, and lighted by the six candles upon the sacred table, which was arranged in the humblest manner consistent with the services of the religion.

The five gentlemen, kneeling side by side upon the steps of the altar, received the host with the deepest reverence, and then rising, returned in silence to the apartment they had quitted.

Mr. Gerard, who had now put aside his ceremonial robes, soon followed them; before he entered it, however, the religious woman had withdrawn the primer, the vase, and the holy candles, and a single lamp was alone burning upon the table. Nothing in short remained which could connect the Jesuit with the ceremony of the oath.

Father Gerard was a small, well-made little man, with a pair of remarkably bright piercing eyes, and a countenance *fin*, as the French would say, but pleasant and

engaging. He entered cheerfully into conversation, as if his heart were entirely free from the weight of that fatal secret which oppressed the others—or, as it should rather be said, attempted to enter into conversation, for his guests were moody and thoughtful, with the exception of Wright, who talked away in his usual rough, coarse manner, apparently indifferent to what had just passed. The father, with the good breeding common to those of his order, employed himself in doing the honours of his poor house as he called it; pressing the gentlemen to be seated, and to taste a glass of sack or wine before supper, which would be served in a few minutes.

But they all refused, and continued to walk up and down the room, now and then exchanging a sentence or two, but their thoughts, it was evident, were far otherwise engaged.

Presently one of the boys who had attended at the mass, dressed in a short, full jerkin, little knee-breeches, high shoes, falling collar, and leathern belt, the usual dress of young boys at that time, announced that supper was ready. And the gentlemen were ushered by the priest into the comfortable little room, where stood a table hospitably spread. Several bottles of wine were on the table, and tall Rhenish glasses, with their long and slender stems, set as at present before every cover. The table-cloth was of the most delicate texture—the dishes of silver—the plates of treen, but elegantly cut.

At the polite entreaty of their host, the five gentlemen sat down, but to eat seemed impossible. One or

two glasses of wine they hastily swallowed, for their throats were parched, and their lips black and dry; that is to say, again with the exception of Mr. Wright, and, indeed, of Mr. Fawkes. Mr. Wright eat, drank, and pledged the priest as usual. Mr. Fawkes, whose habits were to the last degree abstemious, swallowed some morsels of bread, and one huge bumper of wine.

The priest eat sparingly, but drank a good deal of the wine; and finding it vain to attempt to rouse the spirits of his guests, soon rose from table.

They now all rose to take leave, for there seemed a general desire to separate. They resumed their long cloaks, hats, and rapiers, of which they had disencumbered themselves before entering the chapel; and bidding the priest adieu, and silently wringing hands one with another, mounted their horses, and without further colloquy rode severally away.

During the absence of Mr. Winter in Flanders, Catesby had employed himself in making inquiries for a house adjacent to the houses of Parliament, from which the mine might be carried out. One of pretty considerable size, which abutted against one of the walls, belonging to Whyniard, a person holding some insignificant employment about the palace, was pitched upon by Bates, Catesby's servant.

It was now in the possession of a man called Ferris Piercy, whose employment as gentleman persuiver, led

him to be much about the court, was commissioned to obtain this, as it lay conveniently for him, and his possession of it would excite no suspicion. The house at Lambeth, occupied by Catesby, which was at no great distance from the river, was selected as a proper place wherein to collect the necessary stores, and where it would be easy to convey them by night across the river.

Mr. Fawkes, whose face was not known about town, assumed, as will be remembered, the name of Johnson, and personated a servant of Piercy's. The house, not without considerable difficulty, was at last obtained; and the gentlemen had repeated meetings at different places, in order to concert their future measures. Having learned, however, that Parliament was prorogued till the ensuing February, 1604-5, aware of the increased chance of discovery to which a commencement of the work earlier than was absolutely necessary, would expose them, and probably not sorry to delay their fatal undertaking, they resolved to separate, and betake themselves to their various country houses; meeting as little as was possible in the interim, and avoiding even the slightest allusion by letter to their conspiracy.

In the meantime, a person named Robert Keyes, the son of a Protestant clergyman, had been admitted into the plot. He appears to have been a person of obscure condition, and was the only one among the conspirators whose fortunes were at a low ebb: for though the funds provided by Robert Catesby and the others were

in the state of their proceedings. they were in the most complete possession of property.

The man had sworn upon the altar, and had repeated the sacrament in confirmation of his oath at a table in the refectory of St. Clement's, belonging to the Priory, a table near Mr. Catesby had at present the same table in his lodgings with his friend.

In the case of Mr. Lewis, who was a man quite unacquainted with the law, they left the house at Lambeth, and continued during their absence to employ himself in the purchase of powder, which he was in that place to sell.

They then retired themselves to their several country houses. An intimacy entered by Mr. Fawkes, went into the house of St. James.

There is in the gateway of the place, above which is a small tower and which contains two rooms, one small room and the other a large open fire-place of considerable size. The other almost a mere room. It was here that Mr. Fawkes took up his residence for the present time. It being the desire of all parties that he should remain absolutely unknown, and his name be as little seen as possible. It had been determined that he should not inhabit the dwelling-house, and be exposed to the observation of casual visitors. Some of the furniture was then in this gate-house, a cradle bed, a table, and a few wooden chairs; and here the society took up his abode, living several weeks entirely secluded from society: save the cautious and occasional visits of Robert Catesby.

Mr. Catesby had not thought it proper to acquaint his mother with the design. Fanatic, revengeful, devoted to the church as she was, there was yet something so violent and ungoverned in her temper and feelings, that he feared she might, under the influence of any excitement, be led to cast out distant hints at least, which might lead to dangerous surmises: he bore, therefore, all the irritating and exasperating sarcasms in which she indulged at his supineness and indifference, in obstinate silence, and thus only angered her the more. They had never been upon happy terms, this stern mother and this determined son; and now every hour seemed still further to alienate them from each other.

The two poor little boys, moping in melancholy silence about the house and the dull and gloomy garden, obtained very little of his attention; his time was chiefly spent in reading those books of casuistry published by the Jesuits—Suarez, Bellarmine, Escobar, &c. &c., in which palliation, excuse, defence, and even inducement may be found held out for every crime.

Ambrose, the old serving-man, and Bates, his son, were alone entrusted with the secret of Mr. Fawkes' residence in the gate-house; by them he was supplied with food and other necessaries; and late in the evening, through the dusky twilight, the trembling children from their nursery window might descry a tall dark figure, in company with their awful father, slowly perambulating the terrace in the centre of the garden.

Their terrified imaginations filled with all sorts of fantastical images of good and bad angels, devils, and

—they stood with awe as they beheld that ap-
 pearing and passing with their misery made, believed
 that the human form had come and vanished in a
 moment of its existence was the great parent of evil, in
 nature with their sick and suffering father.

At that time Cassin and Fawkes, seated in the
 rooming-house, would discuss
 their projects. As yet, however, except the hiring of
 a house and the purchase of a little gunpowder,
 nothing had been done. As yet the whole scheme
 remained in the stage of "speculation": a position,
 it would seem, that enabled them to believe
 in the possibility of a great deed and plan the bloodiest
 crimes.

The persistence of Cassin, as will be readily sup-
 posed, made this course of thought become gradually
 more and more interested in the idea of his plot; and
 more and more hardened against those compunctious
 feelings which had at first occasioned such doubts and
 hesitations. The conversation too, of Mr. Fawkes,
 who, possessing all the prejudices and habits of a soldier
 of the old Spanish infantry, was accustomed to look
 upon the most cruel barbarities of war with perfect cool-
 ness and indifference: and who regarded this affair just
 as he would any desperate military attempt; served
 more, perhaps than either his casuistical books or the se-
 cret insinuations of Garner or Tesmond to accustom him
 to the idea. He began to look upon it in much the same
 light as some Catholics have learned to look upon the
 horrible massacre of St. Bartholomew, when they call

it 'the battle of Paris!' Hearing Mr. Fawkes plan the mine, calculate expansive forces, resistances; talk of the excavations at the siege of Antwerp; and of this project precisely as if of the same description; it will not surprise an observer of human nature, to find how far the voice of conscience was stifled.

Great is the power of names in effacing the true character of deeds.

"And why is my poor Fabian so melancholy?" said the kind and gentle Evelyn, "look up, boy; why it is days since one saucy sentence hath passed thy lips. What is it, poor youth? Nay, for that matter, we are all sad enough; but thou shouldst have a little nonsense under thy cap and bells, to make my noble husband smile."

"Madam," said the Jester, whose pale cheek and faded eye spoke the anxiety of his mind, "I have told you that my vocation was ended; the fool's coat serves me no longer, the voice of the jester is about to be silenced in the miseries of those of the ancient religion, the long age of tears is come. Turn me out, madam," said he, attempting to smile, but it was a sad and bitter smile, "and hie thee to the court, to provide thyself with another—motley is the only wear there, they tell me."

"I will have nothing from that bad court," said Evelyn, "no, not even a fool; and I will not part with thee, my Fabian, for thou art rare at one thing, thou canst take the hue of thy company."

“Madam, it must needs be, that he should be of the chameleon order, who would make his part good among his betters; but the hue of your poor reptile is darker than that of the field he traverses. I shall only,” said he, gravely, “add trouble to those whose troubles will come upon them ere long; let me go home, madam, for why shouldst thou grieve for the poor clown?”

“Nay,” said she, kindly, “I will share thy sorrow, Fabian, for hast thou not ever taken part in mine? My ioy, my sorrow, have ever met an answer in thy heart, poor fellow! Hast thou not joined in grief with me over my father’s hallowed coffin? and thy tears of rapture coursed down thy cheeks with mine, when my Kenelm was first placed in his father’s arms. Tell me, boy, what is it then?”

The jester’s face grew paler and paler, till his lips were almost white, and then he said, “My brother was among those at Manchester.”

“The heavens have pity upon thee, then, poor fellow,” said she, with a trembling voice; “for it was but this hour ago, that my husband, half smothered with grief and indignation, told me . . .”

“That their doom is sealed—that they are no more,” said Fabian: “I know it.”

“Was he a priest?” whispered Evelyn.

“No, madam, a poor simple lay man—only, for harbouring of a priest, and suffering of Catholic ceremonies to be carried on in his house—hiding of ‘Agnus dei,’ and certain books, which touched, indeed, at the king’s title; but he is no scholar, poor soul, and knew not what

stuff it was that in obedience to his ghostly father he had sewed in the mattress of his bed . . . He was but a poor simpleton.—He was innocent as that baby there,” pointing to the cradle, “and they have murdered him.”

And turning his face to the wall, he sobbed bitterly.

The tears of Evelyn fell fast upon her bosom. Sir Everard had that morning received the intelligence of this barbarous execution. Six persons, one of whom was a priest and the others lay men, had been a few days before executed under the penal statutes at Manchester. A sacrifice in all probability on the part of the king to the cruel prejudices of the high church party and the puritans; whose distrust of James, in spite of the unprincipled breach of his implied promises, seemed to be hourly increasing.*

This was the most shocking of all those judicial proceedings, upon account of religion, which had yet occurred far exceeding in severity any thing done in the late queen's reign. None but those convicted of treasons against the state, had ever suffered under her government; but here were men found guilty and executed for merely having harboured Jesuits and priests in their houses, without any evidence of treasonable practices. However dangerous the character of the men they had concealed, the punishment so far exceeded the offence, that it raised a feeling of almost universal rage and despair among the Catholics. More especially as the peace with Spain had been ratified without the slight-

* See a letter upon this subject from a dignitary of the church in *Winwood*.

est remission of severity being obtained for their party.

They could not disguise from themselves that they had lost their only protector, when Phillip became an ally of James. They now looked upon themselves as abandoned to their fate, and wholly in his power; and were persuaded that, for some cause or other, whatever his secret sentiments might be, he had resolved with regard to them, upon a course of the most unmerciful policy.

Everard had received the intelligence of the cruel execution, with an indignation which he found it impossible to control : his cheek grew pale with anger, his eye darkened, and a deep feeling of resentment—to which, till then, he had been a stranger—glowed within his heart. A burning thirst for retribution—for it shall not be called the thirst for vengeance—a desire to see justice executed upon those cruel murderers, took possession of him. Mingled with an intense wish, proper to a character so benevolent, so made up of love and pity as his was, that something might be done—something at least attempted—to wrest from the government some sanctions, which might shelter his unhappy brethren from the capricious persecutions to which they were exposed. For it was not so much upon the great and powerful, that this present oppression fell ; not as in former times, chiefly upon a few eminent families, called upon as it might seem, to stand forward and suffer for the rest ; but it was upon the weak, the defenceless, the poor in spirit, and the low in purse—now abandoned as

a prey, like a flock of timid sheep, to these reckless spoilers—that these accumulated fines were levied, the payment of which with their scanty means was nothing less than beggary and starvation.

His heart bled for the sufferers; his appetite left him, sleep forsook his pillow ; he would rise in the night, when his innocent Evelyn slumbered quietly, in happy ignorance—as he had kept her, of the true state of affairs—would descend into his garden,—and there, while the full moon shone cold upon those Rutlandshire hills, and gleamed upon the distant towers of Rockingham Castle, while the autumn wind whispered low among the branches, and the dying leaves swept before his feet, when all was silent save the distant yelps of some dog in the distance, or the clock in the little church tolling one—would Everard, another unhappy victim of the mistakes and violences of the times, pace that terrace in the eastern front of Dry Stoke, meditating bitterly upon the prospect before him. Vainly looking around for consolation—hope or consolation there was none.

Every month as the year advanced, only brought the news of some fresh instance of oppression ; some unexpected evil, unknown even in the darkest of the preceding years. Where was this to end, and what was to become of them?

The provincial, true to the character he had assumed of a man of peace, spoke only of submission, and the hope that something might be granted to the intercession of the holy father; artfully, at the same time,

giving it to be understood that from such intercession he himself had little expectation. Still his words breathed nothing but patience. He knew well that the idea of a treasonable resistance to the measures of the government, would have been abhorrent to Digby's principles ; and he did not attempt to combat this opinion ; on the contrary, he rather exaggerated upon it ; till Digby himself became impatient, and tormented by the idea that something *must* or *ought* to be done.

They had that very evening been arguing the matter together. Digby had been led under the exasperation of the moment to propose various plans, for obtaining relief. But Mr. Darcy had found objections to them all. His objections were, perhaps, just ; the persuasion he expressed of the utter hopelessness that any good consequence could from such proceedings arise, were probably well-founded ; but whether well-founded or not, he was secretly resolved that no attempt, of this nature should at present be made. His whole mind was absorbed in the vast enterprise of Catesby, the success of which would render the triumphant ascendancy of his church an absolute certainty.

But not one syllable of this did he breathe to any living being. In contradiction to the most stringent regulations of his order, he, on an occasion so important, ventured to dissemble even with his superiors. His letters to the pope, to the General of the order, to Father Parsons, which are preserved, are all filled with assurances that the Catholics are quiet, and that he is using every exertion in his power to keep them so.

Many of these letters being written while there is historic demonstration that he was acquainted with the minutest details of the Plot.

At present, as we have seen, he had not allowed himself to be made acquainted with any of these details; relying implicitly on the spirit and ability of Catesby. He kept himself as much as possible aloof, and employed himself in preparing the minds of such men as Digby, Tresham, and Rockwood, in his usually artful manner, against the time, when circumstances might call upon them to take part in the grand enterprise.

His proceedings had completely blinded these ingenuous young people. The confidence of Everard, which he had once been in danger of forfeiting, was now restored. The advocate of simple piety, unblemished truth, charity, love, and harmony, was Mr. Darcy, in the quiet halls of Dry Stoke.

Evelyn, as we have seen, began to love and trust him, and Everard to consult him.

Evelyn went up to the poor weeping jester, and laying her hand affectionately upon his shoulder, said—

“Do not weep so, Fabian—we must all die—and blessed are those who die martyrs in a just and holy cause!”

“You say well, madam,” said he, drying his eyes, but continuing to sob like a child: “but that is not all.” And then the colour rose crimson over his cheeks

and forehead, as turning his face, he muttered, "I am about to be a beggar, Madonna."

"Do you want to beg a largess from me, Fabian? Nay, make not so much ado about it—you know we both love you. It is but miserable pelf, after all. We have more than enough—only tell me what you want. Nay, nay, do not be ashamed to ask of Evelyn—I shall be offended if I see you do so."

"My widowed mother" said he.

"What of her, dear Fabian? I have often asked you of her; and you have often, in your quaint way, told me of the pretty cottage, and of the lime-trees in flower, and the swallows sailing before the door; and of their pretty households in the roof; and of the jackdaw—and of her tortoiseshell cat—and her flowers and her bees; and I know not what. You should have told me, dear Fabian, if there was any thing wanting—your pictures were too pretty—how could I guess it?"

"It's all gone," said he, and the tears burst out, and ran over his poor cheeks again. "They broke into that neat, quiet, pretty house; they have rifled her of her son, and he is dead; they have terrified the poor girl, my sister, into frenzy; and they have turned the poor helpless widow out of doors. It was broken into and ransacked, searching for the priest first—and then came the fines—and all, all is sold. The trees are cut down—the cottage is another's—she is lying dying at Mr. Pound's. You must let me go to her, madam, and you must give me gold. Ill news, they say, travels fast;

but this has been a sore long time in reaching me. I want gold to buy my brother's body, and see it laid in holy earth; and to bury my poor mother by his side—for she will not live long after him.”

The kind heart of Evelyn beat fast at this description; she felt all a woman's passion rising within her breast; she began to feel that resentment of wrong which has animated so many of her sex, and made them enthusiasts in the cause of resistance to oppression.

A few evenings afterwards, Everard and Evelyn sat together under the well-known oak-tree, both silent and absorbed. That child, on which the father doted so tenderly, was upon his knee; fixing his large beautiful eyes in grave astonishment upon his father's face; he had, young as he was, an obscure sympathy with his father's feelings, and wondered why he neither talked with him nor played. The little infant was slumbering on its sweet mother's bosom. Deeply Everard sighed, as he gazed upon those loved ones of his heart. A heavy cloud—a dark foreboding of evil to come, was gathering over his spirits—and he was already, with all a father's anxiety, considering how he should secure the future prospects of his family, amidst the destruction which seemed impending over all.

Relief had been abundantly administered to the poor jester, and he was gone; but that very morning had brought news of the punishment of that aged Lancashire gentleman, Mr. Pound, for merely presenting a petition in favour of one unfortunate man, condemned to death,

as he declared illegally, for harbouring a priest. This intelligence seemed to cut off all expectation of effecting any thing by the means of petitioning, upon which Everard had built some hopes; and justified the indignant contempt with which Mr. Darcy treated any such idea.

CHAPTER XI.

“Nois em venuti al luogo ov’io t’ho detto
 Che vederái le genti dolorose
 Ch’hanno perduti il ben dell’ intelletto.”

Dante.

the year had passed away.

the events to which we have alluded, had, as it will be supposed, greatly exasperated the feelings of the irritators; and strengthened the determination of the Jesuits to encourage them in their resolution. In this the fathers had so well succeeded, that the time appointed for the commencement of operations, the scruples of those engaged appear to have so melted, as to enable them to begin their work with resolution, and to labour in it with a perseverance, every way based upon the conviction, that their enterprise was just and praiseworthy; and one, in the support of it, the whole body of Catholics, if intrusted with discretion, would unite.

In justice, however, to that body, it should be said that this persuasion was entirely unfounded—The guilt of the conspiracy rests upon the heads of the conspirators, and of the Jesuits alone: no other Catholic, either layman, or churchman, appears to have had the least share in it.

It was early in December, as it should seem, that they found it necessary to employ Bates in various

pieces of business connected with the conspiracy, and seeing him to be a prying sort of fellow, who would certainly make out some part of the truth for himself, thought it safest to intrust him with the secret, and to bind him by those oaths of fidelity and secrecy, which had been administered to the others.

The unfortunate young man, therefore, took the oath at Catesby's house at Lambeth; in the presence of Mr. Winter; and afterwards, in company with that gentleman and his master, receiving the holy sacrament in confirmation of it. His conscience, however, was very ill at ease upon the subject; and he could not rest until he had, with Catesby's permission, disclosed the matter in confession to a priest, and received absolution. The permission was accorded, upon condition that Mr. Tesmond, otherwise Greenway, of whom mention has been so often made before, should be the person selected for the purpose.

He, of course, received the confession without manifesting the least surprise: and the scruples of Bates were soon satisfied by the assurances of the Jesuit, that the cause was a good cause, and that he had only to obey his master's directions and to conceal it, "which would be not dangerous to his soul; seeing that the matter so nearly concerned the welfare of the holy Catholic Church." He was specially forbidden to reveal the secret, even under the seal of confession to any other priest; and upon his promising so to do, he received absolution; and in the simplicity of his ignorant heart, never seems to have been troubled with any further feelings of compunction upon the subject.

And now the dark and short days of December, with their fogs, and their rains, and their storms, set in ; and taking advantage of the long nights—the conspirators having laid in a provision of hard boiled eggs, cold meats, pasties, &c., entered the house, shut themselves up, and began upon their fearful task.

Mr. Fawkes, whom they had succeeded in keeping entirely out of sight and unknown, assumed the name of Johnson, and personated a servant of Piercy, with whom the charge of the house, during the supposed absence of the master, appeared to be left. He occupied the room in front on the ground floor; frequently going out, leaving the door locked behind him, to watch on the outside—to gather rumours, and to observe any thing going forward which might excite suspicion.

It was a dark, moonless, winter midnight, when wrapped in heavy cloaks which concealed the mining tools each man carried, and with their hats flapped over their faces, the gentlemen, one by one, stole like criminals to the appointed house, and were severally admitted by Fawkes.

Resolute men they were all, we know ; and yet, as, collected in a little dark parlour at the back of the house, they looked round upon each other, and realised for the first time the dreadful undertaking which they were about to commence ; each cheek grew pale, their limbs trembled, and when they spoke the tones of their voice sounded so hollow, hoarse, and unnatural, that they involuntarily recoiled as it were from each other.

For their consciences would make themselves be heard, and their hearts were knocking at their ribs;

while their countenances assumed a peculiar expression, which they ever from that time in some degree retained, and which struck terror into those who afterwards beheld, and have described them.

After a little hesitation, and a few sentences exchanged in whispers, they left the house, and, preceded by Mr. Fawkes, crossed the garden to a small shed intended for the keeping of garden tools, which leaned against the wall of the parliament-house.

The garden was surrounded by high walls, and not commanded at a single point by any window. No situation could be more favourable for their purpose. As they crept stealthily along, each man cast his eyes around as if to assure himself that this was the case. The tall black walls rose high over head, canopied by the pitchy vault of night. A very small dark lantern held by Mr. Fawkes shed a small ray of light across the obscurity.

They entered the shed one by one, led by Catesby; each one holding a mattock, pick-axe, or spade, over his shoulder; and there they stood, looking alternately at each other and at the wall before them—but no man uttered a word. Until Fawkes pointing with his hand, said at last in a low voice, “that there it were best to begin”.

But they stood motionless—frozen as it were with awe and expectation. Scarcely appearing to breathe, while the hoarse winter’s wind swept, loudly lamenting, by.

At last Catesby, who had stood as one transfixed with horror—his eyes starting from his head—gazing mechanically upon the wall before him—roused, as if from a

dream; reverently crossed himself; and heaving his mattock high above his head, struck with the full force of his powerful arm one blow against the wall, —a large fragment fell to the ground: it was enough: —As in other cases of desperate assault and crime, the first blow did the work. The example was immediately followed by all the others, who now plied their dreadful task with the greatest enthusiasm and emulation.

Fawkes had left them to return to the house and discover whether the noise of the working could be heard from without. A quick, dull, beating sound, as from within the bowels of the earth, was all he heard; and he was satisfied that during the night it would excite no attention.

So he watched, walking up and down in the front rooms of the house, while they laboured with a sort of desperate violence, until, “the toil drops fell from their brows like rain.”

“They were all gentlemen,” said Fawkes in his confession, “of name and blood; and not any was employed in or about this action, (no, not so much as digging and mining) that was not a gentleman; and we all lay in the house and had shot and powder, and resolved to die before we were taken.”

They had evidently, by this time been wrought to such a pitch of fanaticism, as to consider their purpose one far too holy to be desecrated by being committed to inferior hands: but notwithstanding this horrible perversion of sentiment, honest nature would even yet at times be too strong for them; and strange indescribable horrors would visit their minds. They worked at

their mine however, without intermission, every night; and during the day, employed themselves in spreading the earth, and burying the rubbish in the garden.

One night while they were toiling with an intensity of labour that was astonishing in men reared in ease and delicacy, and unaccustomed to efforts of this nature; striving in emulation as it would seem of one another, and heavy blow following blow with astonishing rapidity; they were suddenly startled by a sound which seemed like the deep reverberation of a bell—It was like the slow, solemn tolling of a passing bell; and seemed to proceed from the centre of the thick wall which they were mining. It is impossible to describe the dread and horror with which they were seized. Each arm was arrested; and in a kind of mute dismay they stood staring at each other, listening to the solemn, unearthly sound.*

Toll—toll—

The deep, melancholy toll of a funeral bell.

It was impossible to be mistaken—Deep, slow, mysterious—from the very centre of the wall, the sound proceeded: It seemed like the knell sounding, solemn and awful, for a soul in the departing agony.

They stood for some time with pallid cheeks, and shuddering hearts listening attentively. At last, each man, as if by common consent, laid down his tools; and without speaking, they crept severally out of the shed, and sought shelter with Fawkes in the house. He, they well knew by experience, was little subject to those fits of horror which distracted the spirits of the rest—

Stern and determined, he ever supported the resolution of his companions.

He was standing at the window of his front-room, looking into the street ; where all, however, lay wrapped in the silence of midnight ; when they entered confusedly, and stared at him, but without speaking.

“ Well, gentlemen—what now ? ” was his address as he turned round to them.

“ Come this way,” muttered Catesby.

He followed to the garden.

“ Do you hear it ? ”

The deep measured tolling at slow intervals continued : Fawkes heard it distinctly as the others, and even the dark features of that iron-visaged man underwent a change.

He stood some time perfectly still, as did the rest, who looked almost petrified with amazement ; listening to the slow, measured sound. At last, turning away, he disappeared ; but he was not absent long ; when he returned, he had a cup containing holy water in his hand ; with this he plentifully sprinkled the wall and floor—and the unearthly sound, as it is reported, immediately ceased.

They looked at each other, and began to breathe.

“ Whatever demon hath conjured this sound in order to thwart your enterprise, gentlemen,” said Fawkes, “ it is plain his devices avail not against the powers of Holy Church—Ave Maria—In the name of the blessed Virgin, continue.”

And he turned away with an expression in which something bordering upon contempt might be detected.

Catesby took up his mattock without saying a syllable, and plied his work more vigorously than before—his example was followed by all the rest.

When their spirits had become a little accustomed to their employment, they began to discuss their ultimate plans, and the steps to be taken when the great blow should have been struck. They had thought but little of these things till now; the desire of vengeance and the thirst for victory, had seemed to rest satisfied with the idea of the wide-spreading destruction that they were about to scatter.

That there would be a universal rising of the Catholic gentry so soon as the explosion should have taken place, none of them seemed to doubt; nor that Mr. Fawkes, who was immediately after the event to proceed to Flanders, would be able to obtain large assistance from the Archduke. Little or no resistance could be anticipated on the part of the English Protestants, thunderstruck by the blow, and deprived at one stroke of every leading man of their party. But the late conduct of Spain had alienated their minds, and they abandoned all idea of placing the infanta upon the vacant throne. It was agreed that one of the king's young children should be chosen for the purpose, who should be carefully reared in due habits of obedience to the Roman see. That Prince Henry would perish with his father at the opening of parliament, seemed certain; whether the Duke Charles would be present at the

ceremony, doubtful. In case he should not, Piercy, whose place of gentleman pensioner afforded him free access to the court, engaged to seize upon him; whilst some of the Northamptonshire gentlemen were to get possession of the young Princess Elizabeth, the king's eldest daughter, then residing at the Lord Harrington's in that county.

At this time, too, not as yet hardened and indifferent to the consequences of their crime, the conspirators discoursed much of the friends whom they should attempt to save; and of the various expedients to be adopted in order to prevent their attendance upon parliament; but as time accustomed their consciences to the idea of these horrors, these plans appear to have been abandoned.

Thus in alternations of excessive labour, anxious discourse, visitations of conscience, paroxysms of superstitious horror, or of deep enthusiastic devotion, did they ply their task, from the 11th until the 24th of December.

The parliament being again prorogued till the ensuing Michaelmas, they interrupted their work; and once more separating, retired for a short time into the country, to refresh their strength and spirits.

Catesby came down to spend his Christmas at Harroden—a man scarcely retaining a trace of the animated Robert of earlier days.

Stern, gloomy, thoughtful when alone; in society he assumed the careless air of one indifferent to the passing affairs of the world; and so completely de-

ceived all his friends, that they marvelled at, and censured his insensibility.

At Harroden, a Christmas party was assembled, in order duly to celebrate the solemnities of that great festival. The Catholic families around assembled at this place, in order to impose, by their numbers, upon the public; and prevent, during this holy period, any disturbances from those intolerable visitations which have been so often alluded to. They intended likewise, by concentrating attention upon the rich and great, to divert it from the houses belonging to the less formidable private gentlemen around.

To Harroden came Mr. Tresham from Rushton; Catesby, Sir Everard and Lady Digby, with Eleanor; and here came Darcy and Tesmond; and in their train, as it were, those women devoted to pious offices, Grace Vaux and her sister Mrs. Brooksby; and Mother Anne, that aged nun, who was still living.

To this assembly, which the stern Lady Catesby had disdained to join, did the Jesuit preach patience, submission, and peace, with a zeal which deceived the too credulous Evelyn—filled the mind of Everard with a sort of angry impatience—and excited the highest admiration in Catesby, who well understood his meaning; while the pale cheek of Grace Vaux grew paler, and her thin wasted hand trembled with emotion, as she beheld what seemed the reckless indifference of him, once too dear, to the general distress.

She was grown extremely thin, wasted almost to a shadow; and her once beautiful eyes gleamed with an unnatural brightness, which spoke the fever within.

Intense devotion—constant habits of ascetic discipline—and the irritating sense she entertained of her church's sufferings, added to what she believed to be the culpable insensibility of her party, were wasting her away.

Catesby said little, and when he did speak, it was in a strange careless sort of manner; never failing to second Darcy in his arguments, in favour of passive submission; till the whole assembled company were fretted with a sort of vexatious feeling of disappointment, though they scarcely knew what it was they had hoped or expected from him.

But they had long been accustomed to regard him as the leader of the flock—the one whose genius and spirit were to direct them all: and to see a man, once so full of enterprise, and so fertile in expedients, now sullenly inactive, filled the whole body with a sentiment of despair: a feeling upon which the Father Superior calculated with security—as a means to make them embrace with enthusiasm any plan which time might bring forth.

Catesby, however, was not much in the company of any one. The effort at dissimulation was too great for his harassed spirits. He spent most part of his time in solitude; wandering in those cold, clouded winter days, amid the leafless trees, the snow crushing under his feet, or the bitter wind blowing on his cheek; insensible to external things, and lost in the indulgence of his sullen melancholy.

He rarely accosted Grace Vaux, and her presence seemed to have lost its influence over his feelings; in

truth, compared with the dreadful reality which occupied his thoughts, all other sentiments, however intense, had shrunk into insignificance. It was with Eleanor that he talked and laughed, when he was endeavouring to maintain that indifferent carriage which he affected in general society.

But far was his notice now from affording the unhappy girl any consolation; there was something almost contemptuous, almost rude in his very attentions, and the bitterness within seemed for ever prompting his tongue. Those who saw him devoted to her in the mixed general society assembled, little understood the excessive unhappiness which his inexplicable manner excited in her.

Every sentiment of woman's pride, of woman's tenderness was outraged, and yet she did not complain. She concealed her feelings from Everard—according to that fatal habit, imbibed under the influence of her confessor, of hiding from this honest and kind friend, her genuine sentiments; and when she once hinted at them to Mr. Darcy—who alone possessed her real confidence—he treated the idea with a ridicule so nearly approaching to anger, that she dared not allude to the subject again; but submitted in silence to this fresh misery.

The snow had now fallen heavily, and the company were confined chiefly to the house: it was very large, and contained an intricate succession of passages, and numbers of different rooms, among which, during the tedious winter day, the guests dispersed; to pass away as best they might, the time not occupied in their religious ceremonies.

One day Catesby was sitting in a remote apartment musing over the embers of a decaying fire; and indulging in those dark reveries which were now his usual occupation when alone; his mind still at war with itself, and distracted between his resolutions and his scruples.

The door was gently opened—he turned round—and through the deepening twilight of the apartment saw Grace Vaux enter, clad in those sober garments which she now constantly wore. She did not seem to be aware that any one was in the room, for he was shaded by the dark shadow which fell upon the corner of the chimney which he occupied: but walking slowly up to the window, she clasped her hands, gazed steadfastly at the darkening sky, and sighed heavily.

The snow had ceased, but the gloomy leaden clouds rolled heavily along, and the wind wailed among the tossing branches and drove the drifting snow before it. It was a pitiless night. She stood there quite still as if watching the melancholy scene, her hands clasped, and again she sighed—it was such a heavy sigh!

He sat watching her.

He was no longer capable of feeling any of those emotions which had once agitated him when Grace Vaux was present; his heart lay cold and heavy as a stone within his breast; but the spectre-like appearance of the unhappy victim before him had still power. There seemed to be a sort of dreadful sympathy between them—she looked like the inhabitant of the sepulchre restored by some strange charm to earth,

and his imagination was filled with visions of death and graves.

“ You sigh,” at last he said, in a low voice. “ Grace Vaux sighs. Why should she sigh? Her heart is in Heaven, where her resting-place shall be.—Why should she sigh over the wretched destiny of those who belong to lower worlds?”

She started a little, and turned round as he spoke; then in her melancholy voice said—

“ I did not see you—I thought I was alone—I very seldom sigh—it is an indulgence.”

“ I *never* sigh,” said he. And it was true; this with other expression of human sympathies had left him. “ But I can laugh.”

“ I know it,” said she. “ I have heard you laugh several times since I have been here—I do not love laughter now.”

“ No one loves such laughter as mine,” he said; “ but it will do well enough for the company I shall keep by-and-by.”

“ The company you shall by-and-by keep,” advancing from the window, for she understood his meaning, and a slight shudder passed over her. “ Ah, Mr. Catesby!—why?—why?—What company should you keep? Alas! why should you be an alien and a lost one to hope: why abandon yourself to that sin which is a sin unto death—the sin of final despair.”

“ Nay,” said he, sarcastically, “ what is Grace Vaux thinking of?—I am going to be canonised and a saint in Heaven.”

“Alas! how wildly you talk. Yes, Mr. Catesby, there was a time when the church marked you as one of her most devoted servants—there *was* a time when life and estate would have been cheerfully perilled for her service—but now—in these days of misery, when she lies wretched and defenceless, at the mercy of the oppressor—Robert Catesby is careless and at ease.”

He rose from his seat, grasped her firmly by the wrist, led her to the window, fixed his two glaring eyes upon her face—shining as those of the basilisk are said to do—and with a strange, satanic smile, said:

“Careless and at ease—*that* is how you think of me, is it?—be it so——”

She looked steadfastly upon his face, seeming to peruse it with intense interest—then a gleam of something like pleasure spread over her own; and a faint vision of that once more than human beauty passed before him, as, slowly dropping on both her knees at his feet, her head bent reverently upon her breast, she said,

“Blessed Virgin I praise thee—I glorify thee—Oh, holy Queen of Heaven! my prayers are heard.”

Then rising again, she took his hand, once more fixed her eyes upon his face, and said:

“I have had my suspicions; I have had my hopes; my heart has whispered me that all this was but a hateful mask which hid Robert Catesby’s real countenance,—and that behind that mask. . . .”

“Woman,” he said, almost fiercely, “what was there behind?”

“Devotion, heroism, martyrdom, and — Heaven!” with enthusiasm.

He groaned.

A voice within replied, "Conspiracy, treachery, midnight murder, and—hell!"

"Nay, I ask to know no secrets," said she, as he turned away. "I ask not to share your counsels, even in my prayers; but my prayers shall be with you—for well I know that whatever your enterprises in behalf of our religion may be—they will be righteous and holy."

"Do you believe this of me, saint?" said he, with something of a return of his old tenderness—"and shall your prayers be with me? Then my purposes must be holy. I will esteem them so. But, Grace," he continued, after a few moments' reflection, "this visor which you have, as you think, penetrated, is raised, as you will understand, for no eye but yours. Whatever my course may be, *know nothing*. You see what I am below," he added, with a tone of levity: "a preacher of peace: We must all preach peace you understand: Father Garnet is never wearied of preaching peace."

She sighed and said—

"The ways of the Holy Father Superior are mysteries to me, which I attempt not to penetrate."

"Attempt to penetrate nothing; but of this be sure—you shall yet hear of Robert Catesby before you and I are gathered to the grave, Grace. And when you hear of him," with some return of his former passion he went on, "believe you hear of one, who, living or dying, carried one image ineffaceable on his heart. Nay, fear not," as she drew back. "All things are hardened within me—my heart is hard as iron, now—but one image is engraved and has hardened upon it. When I am dead, Grace, you will pray for me?"

She understood little of all this; but she compre-

hended that things were not going on so quietly as they seemed to choose to make appear, and this poor maiden's heart—ah sad perversion! beat with a terrible pleasure at the idea that destruction was still preparing for the enemies of God.

Everard meanwhile made no attempt to disguise his melancholy. The sufferings of so many whom he knew and loved; the additional severity which was expected from the measures of the present parliament; the doubt and obscurity hanging over the prospects of every one who had remained faithful to the party—aggravated by the inexplicable indifference and inertness of those whom he had been accustomed to regard as the leaders and defenders of the flock—filled him with grief and anxiety; and a fervent desire was rising in his young and generous heart, to be himself the champion of this cause, and the means, some way or other, of rescuing the hapless society to which he belonged, from some portion, at least, of the impending danger.

Meanwhile, the restless expression of Digby's eye; the manner in which he would rise with a kind of irritated impatience from his chair; walk to the window, look out; turn over the leaves of the book he held without reading it; listen with the utmost anxiety for intelligence from without, and receive the various sinister reports with a heavy sigh; were all marked by the Provincial with satisfaction.

When not employed upon those religious ministrations

which occupied much of his time, there he sat by the noble, blazing, Christmas fire; imbibing its warmth with sensations of comfort little alloyed by those questionings of conscience, or generous sorrows for the suffering of others, which embittered every enjoyment to the rest.

Do you see him there?

The cheek of many a one of that company has faded, and many a form has become extenuated, under the influence of the intense feelings which agitate them; but the bland countenance of the reverend father is unaltered; nay, is somewhat rounder and softer than before.

There stands Catesby in a remote corner of the room; his form thin and gaunt, his cheek hollow, his brow lowering, his eye sunken, his lips withered and thin; talking in a strange, ambiguous way to Eleanor, on whose thin and wasted cheek a hectic flush is burning; while a sort of hurried trembling in her limbs, and an affectation of mirth in her hollow laugh, bear evidence of what time has been doing with her.

There walks Everard pacing the room; his eyes cast moodily upon the ground, his hair with that sort of faded tint the result of feverish nights and restless days, his cheek sallow, and his brow contracted.

And there sits Evelyn, with her two little boys upon her lap; casting melancholy glances from time to time first at her husband and then at them again, while her sweet, composed, and cheerful smile is exchanged for one of gentle, subdued sadness.

And there sits the Father Superior, looking remarkably handsome and well; he eats, he drinks after the

labour of the day—and though he complained afterwards of his restless nights, under the pressure of the tremendous secret with which he was burdened, there is no appearance of any such thing. He is somewhat more *embonpoint* than he used to be; and his generous manner of living has a little deepened the colour of his cheek.

You might perhaps think he is dozing in his chair, for his eyelids are dropped, but not altogether so as to close his eyes. He is watching with his wily, serpent-like gaze the young man, who, so restless and uneasy, still continues to pace the room. Most of his victims are already safe in his toils: it remains but to secure this one. The father has already his mind filled with the most glorious visions, though he has not yet permitted himself to be entrusted with the exact details of the plot. But as he has received the assurance of Father Tesmond (who he has reason to believe is entirely in the confidence of the conspirators,) that a matter far more efficient than any scheme ever before contemplated, is in hand: that not one member of the existing government—not one person whatsoever of eminence among the professors of the Protestant religion will escape to oppose the re-establishment of Catholicism in these islands: he is well satisfied. Sometimes the gentle father's visions are of Sicilian vespers. Sometimes of the night of Bartholomew. Sometimes of an old scheme once in agitation before, connected with gunpowder. At all events, he is quite satisfied with Mr. Tesmond's report in these matters. He knows that holy father to be of an ardent and daring temper, and a most sincere

He is full of his own plans and expectations

He is not one who watches the effect of things upon others; he is too much absorbed by what passes within himself. At last Everard takes a chair, draws it close by the Father Superior, and in a low voice, says,

“Parliament, I hear, is prorogued again.”

“So they say.”

“This bodes, I fear, no good for us—but it is some delay at least.”

The father shook his head.

“What do you anticipate?” said Everard, anxiously, “tell me the worst at once, sir. Your desire to keep the party quiet induces you, perhaps, to conceal the extent of your apprehensions; but let it not be so with regard to me. My wish is to know the worst, that I may prepare myself and friends accordingly.”

“Yourself and your friends, Sir Everard! I hope I am not to understand by that any intention on the part of yourself and your friends to make the slightest stir at this present time. I assure you no possible good, but very much evil might arise from any such rash and ill-timed efforts. The only possible result would be what we have seen to be the consequence of the preposterous plot of Watson, and that other priest, namely, to furnish pretences to the government for measures of a still more oppressive nature than the worst we have seen, or the worst we have reason to fear. I have already made you acquainted with the injunctions of his Holiness, and of the most eminent fathers of the Church upon this subject. Let me beseech you to patience. Though that the parliament is prorogued for no good purpose, I have reason to know. For I have secret intelligence

which assures me that measures, whose severity exceeds the worst apprehensions of the most despairing, are in agitation. Your kinsman, Lord Salisbury, seems little inclined to spare your friends."

The colour rose to Everard's temples at the mention of this connexion. He, in common with the rest of his party, looked upon Robert Cecil with a mixture of distrust and indignation amounting to abhorrence.

"The measures of the Earl of Salisbury—my kinsman, as your reverence is pleased to call him, would be matters of great indifference to me in any other case; but I cannot rest contented in this present distress till I know at least what we have to expect—the worst we have to expect."

"What think you of a fine upon recusancy in wives, and the argument by which the justice of such a measure is supported. Merely because, forsooth, if Catholic gentlemen chose to marry recusant ladies, knowing them to be such, it were but just their purses should answer for their wives' delinquencies. Or should they on the other hand think fit to take wives from among the Canaanitish women, and afterwards suffer them to be exposed to the influences of those belonging to holy church, and so they be converted—it is held but just that the husbands should suffer who had exposed them to the influence of such evil teachers. You see the force of the argument, sir," with a sneer; "the lamb stood below and troubled the stream for the wolf's drinking. This will press heavily upon some of our less wealthy brethren I fear. Happily the heiress of Goddeshurst has wherewithal to pay for her own backslidings."

"It will be insupportable!" cried Everard, with his cheeks burning; "it will consummate the spectacle of ruin and misery we see around us."

"Nay," said Mr. Darcy, "there is one thing wanting to complete the matter. I have heard that it is intended in future that merely to be a Catholic shall expose every man to the penalty of a *praemunire*."

Everard started back with dismay written in every feature.

"Then there is neither mercy nor pity to be expected," said he; "unhappy! unhappy England! Sir, if we are to submit to this, the Catholic religion in this country is annihilated, and the lamp of truth extinguished: but I cannot believe it."

"Wait, and you will see," said the priest, in a compassionate tone, watching the agitated countenance and changing colour of the young man with secret pleasure. "My intelligence may be premature. I would wish not to be the bearer of ill news. Only have patience, the mind of his gracious majesty may alter."

Everard gnashed his teeth.

"I am sorry, sir, to see you so discomposed," said Mr. Darcy; "this is a world in which we must all learn to submit to injustice with patience, since it is forbidden to us to contend."

"There are limits to submission," said the young man.

The Jesuit lifted up his blue eye, looked at him, let it fall, and said nothing.

Everard's eye glanced at Catesby. He was accustomed to look to him in every period of emergency.

At last, rising hastily and putting back his chair, he approached his friend.

"You have heard the last news," he said, addressing him, and interrupting a sort of bantering sarcastic conversation, which he was carrying on with Eleanor. "Parliament is prorogued."

"Is it?" said Catesby, with indifference.

"And have you learned what measures are in preparation immediately upon its meeting?"

Catesby looked up in his face—it was a quick, suspicious, inquiring glance; but the expression of Everard's countenance satisfied him.

A strange smile stole over his face, and he said:

"No—let me hear."

Everard repeated the account which had distressed himself so exceedingly.

"I doubt it not," said Catesby: "there will be very severe and effectual measures taken at the meeting of Parliament. But you hear what the Father Superior says—there is nothing for it but patience."

"My patience is well nigh exhausted when I hear Robert Catesby preaching it," was his friend's reply.

"Oh! I am an altered man," said the other, mockingly. "I don't know what is come to me—but I am as a mere lamb. We have all of us changed characters—it's a sort of pantomime life at the best—a mere stage, where we take our parts at the commands of the great manager—destiny. I am grown tame and Everard is grown cruel; and the young Eleanor of other days is pleased to play the sorrowful. Nay, I saw you look sad and sorry—never deny it," turning abruptly to her; "and

you need not be sorrowful. It is for Digby and me, with our poor disinherited boys, to sigh, Eleanor. The world lies before *you*. Marry a nobleman of the right side, and then you need not look so woe begone."

"Insulting!" said the proudly swelling heart; and she turned away, and, her breast heaving with passion, and the tears blinding into her eyes, went and sat down by Mr. Darcy.

"What are Robert and Digby speaking of?" said he, gently taking her hand—"and what has Robert been saying to the lovely Eleanor? Has that proud heart of his at last confessed itself vanquished? I saw you long talking together."

"Mr. Darcy," said she, "do not deceive me: you have long consoled my pride by such assurances: my whole weak, erring heart has been exposed to you—not only in confession, but as to my adviser and my friend."

"Your best and truest friend—is it not so?"

She could almost have said, "I doubt it," but repressed the thought as impious.

"Doubtless, you have others both lovers and friends—but all have their own cares and their own affections to divert the current of interest from one like the lovely Eleanor. She is but second in the regards of those who have tenderer relations."

He touched upon the right string. Her faulty passionate nature was a prey to jealousy. She had ever felt inclined to be jealous of the affection of Everard for Evelyn; and the faithless director had stimulated instead of correcting the fault. It was his part to loosen all the domestic ties that could interfere with his own influence.

"I have a heart unoccupied with such things: it is emptied of self and its affections to receive those of my children in the church," said he with unction.

"Mr. Catesby," she said, abruptly—for there was something in his softness strangely disaccordant with her wretched feelings—"is become so strange, that I am at a loss to know what to think of him Unless, indeed, he is hatching some new plot; and that is what occupies him so entirely."

The father started in spite of his habitual self-possession.

There was no time to be lost in diverting her mind from this dangerous suggestion; and he hesitated not in his choice of means.

"What absurd and romantic notions fill young women's heads," he began, with considerable asperity in his tone, "and how strangely careless they are as to the mischief they may do, by the wanton and idle use of their tongues. Mr. Catesby, let me tell you, young woman, is too good a Catholic to incur the censure of the holy Father by carrying on any such schemes as you suppose; being, as he is, enjoined to remain quiet. Pray let me hear no more of such nonsense; if you would not bring a man into trouble—who, if he finds it impossible, after all, to love you, at least deserves some gratitude at your hands by the pains he has taken to endeavour at it."

She turned pale with anger at this speech.

He saw this, but he had suddenly changed his plan of proceeding: he saw it was impossible to impose upon Eleanor so far as to persuade her to attribute to passion for herself the change in Catesby's deportment towards

her: yet the danger of allowing her suspicions to travel the right way was imminent—so without deigning to cast a thought of compassion upon the heart he was about to crush, he said:

“As you are pleased to give any interpretation save the true one—however false or however dangerous such interpretation may be—to a demeanour that does not quite satisfy your vanity; it may be as well to open your eyes at once, and make you see—if those who will not see can be made to see—that there is a hidden grief, an ill-suppressed and now guilty passion, which keeps Mr. Catesby in that unhappy state of mind which your wicked insinuations would render a misfortune indeed! I wished to keep the unwelcome truth from you; I hoped that time, the great healer, might change one of you, or both of you; but in that I have been deceived. You *will* persist, in defiance of all a woman’s best pride, in nourishing a passion for a man who cares not for you, and whose heart is with that sainted angel with whom you indeed do well to put yourself into comparison. Let us have no more of those pretences and delusions with which mankind ever seek to cover unpalatable truths. Learn like others to look evil in the face; and be pleased to put a rational construction upon the variations of Mr. Catesby’s humour.”

She opened her eyes with astonishment, she could not believe her senses. This from him!

He did not seem to perceive her emotion; but turning on his chair, he stretched out his hand, took up a book which lay upon the table near him, opened it, and began to read, or pretend to read.

The pulses at her heart were beating as if it would burst. She wanted him to speak, she wanted the consolation of a few more words; she felt that irresistible necessity to unburden her heart, as if without relief it must break at once.

He understood pretty well what she was suffering, but he was resolved to say no more. It was a relief to him to be no longer under the necessity of feigning an opinion which he did not really hold. He had all along been aware of the indifference of Catesby's heart to this young creature; he had flattered her into a belief of his partiality as a means of maintaining an influence over her mind, which might be made of service in influencing other members of her family; the necessity for this was now at an end. Evelyn was now the medium through which to get at Everard; and as for Catesby, there was no further necessity for intriguing with regard to him. He knew she would not venture to utter a complaint against him to any living creature; and were she even to venture to accuse him of having misled her, how easy to deny the accusation, and throw the whole upon the weakness of her own self-delusion!

So he continued to read with a calm, unruffled countenance; while she, after having gazed at him wistfully for some time—hoping he would raise his eyes, see and pity her anguish, and vouchsafe at least one word of comfort—seeing him continue his occupation as if nothing had occurred of the least moment or interest, turned at last away, and quitted the room.

And then that poor creature retired to weep in silence

in the most secluded corner of that large and gloomy house, like some poor wounded bird that steals into a thicket to die. She had been so accustomed to reserve all her secret confidence for this man, that she had lost the habit of opening her heart to others: it was become almost impossible to her. She felt totally alone and deserted in the world, and as if forsaken by all mankind; and she had been so accustomed to his flatteries and his sympathy, that the shock she had sustained was as if the ground had vanished from under her feet. She had not been taught to seek for support in the strength and fortitude of her own heart—still less from an appeal to Him, the pitying father of every sufferer—far had it been from the policy of the Jesuit to raise the mind to a tone such as this. He had rested every thing upon himself, and now he rudely—without preparation as without remorse, destroyed the very foundation of her mind.

Alarmed at the direction in which the suspicions of Eleanor had pointed, he had hastily substituted a new and most agonising feeling, which he felt assured would distract her attention, and suffer her mind to dwell upon no other.

It fell out as he intended.

The heart of the poor young creature was crushed, and her spirit broken at once; and she never throughout the ensuing awful year, troubled Father Darcy with her surmises, or Mr. Catesby with her conversation.

She retired with her brothers and sister to Dry Stoke, uttering no complaint which could betray her secret, while she faded before their eyes like a snow wreath.

CHAPTER XII.

“Driven forward like a wither'd leaf,
Yea, like a ship at random blown,
To distant places and unknown.”

Wordsworth.

It was in February that the conspirators met again, purposing to renew their work at the mine.

But when they had arrived at a certain depth a new difficulty arose; water flowed in upon them in so considerable a quantity, as threatened to put a stop to their operations. One evening as they were labouring they were startled by the loud noise of something falling overhead. Fawkes, as usual, going out to inquire, learned, as is well known, that the noise proceeded from some coals that were in course of removal from a cellar exactly under the parliament-house, which cellar was now to be let. Those who understand the characters of the men, will not be surprised to hear that not only were they relieved from all further anxiety as to the issue of their plan by this discovery, but that they looked upon it as a signal interference of Providence in favour of their undertaking. Their spirits animated by such considerations, they took measures to obtain possession of the cellar. The cellar was hired by Johnson in the name of Picrcy, to contain fuel for the use of the house close by which he occupied; and with more cheerful feelings than they had as yet known, they employed themselves

in the dead of the night in conveying the twenty barrels of gunpowder which they had accumulated at Wynyard's house into the cellar; covering them, with five hundred billets, and as many faggots, so as to effectually screen them from casual observation.

It seems extraordinary that they were able to effect all this, without exciting the slightest suspicion in the neighbourhood : but when it is recollected that people went early to rest in those days; that the streets were perfectly dark, not illuminated by the slightest lamp of any kind; and that the passing of a solitary cart at midnight now and then up the street, would not be attended to; the matter may be easily accounted for.

During the month of January Mr. Catesby had visited Oxford, and there had opened the matter to Robert Winter, of Huddingstone, elder brother to Thomas, with whom you are so well acquainted; and to John Grant, of Norbrook. Robert Winter had married a daughter of John Talbot, of Grafton—a gentleman of great wealth and influence in the county of Worcester, and held in singular esteem by the Catholics. Robert Winter does not appear to have been visited by those scruples of conscience which perplexed the others; his objections seem alone to have arisen from consideration of the disgrace and ruin which a failure would inevitably entail upon the whole Catholic body.

“The estate of the Catholics,” was Catesby's answer, “cannot be rendered worse, for it is already desperate;” repeating it as a fact with which he was well acquainted, that such laws were undoubtedly to be

made in the ensuing parliament as should bring all Catholics within a *praemunire* at the least.

. “God forbid,” was Robert Winter’s reply.

He then suggested that foreign aid, and the support of some of the great men of the kingdom, should at least be obtained. But Catesby assured him, that for foreign aid, that had been looked to: but as for his countrymen, “there was not one rascal lord among them all, to whom he dare entrust so mighty a secret.”*

John Grant, of Norbrook, was a man of the utmost fanaticism in matters of religion, and was still less scrupulous than Robert Winter. He looked upon the plot in the light of an heroic effort for his religion; acceptable in the eyes of God, and glorious in the eyes of man.

But when, in the beginning of May, 1605, the preparations were all completed—the twenty barrels of gunpowder placed, and covered with stones and bars of iron to increase the effect of the explosion—the door closed and locked—Fawkes despatched to Flanders to obtain foreign aid—and the conspirators having separated, Catesby had returned alone to his melancholy house at Ashby; to the company of his severe mother and of his poor little children—the agonies of remorse and irresolution which had been suppressed by the presence of the more unhesitating tempers which surrounded him, awoke again with all their horror.

He, the leading conspirator—he, on whom the whole responsibility of this dreadful undertaking lay—he, who had silenced the scruples of the rest—the piercing cries of his own conscience drove him almost to distraction.

* Historical.

Until all was actually ready, the enterprise seemed still to lie in that region of speculation, which his masters in the dangerous art of casuistry had taught him was open to all men. But now that the preparations were completed, the conspiracy, leaving those dim regions of thought and imagination, began to assume the nature of an absolute fact.

Men were to die—hundreds of living beings, many of whom had never injured himself, his religion, or his party; numbers of familiar faces—those whom he had known for years; some even of his own religion; his intimate acquaintance, and household friends,—real, actual, living, breathing men, were to be scattered by this blast of destruction to the elements: shattered, maimed, slaughtered, while the ruins of peaceful homes, the streaming blood of innocents without number, should accompany the mighty ruin!

The man who had felt with so much intensity, the event of that evening when by his pistol a fellow man fell dead; whose imagination had been so much struck by the mere picture of the body so recently instinct with the breath of life, swinging helpless over the saddle; he, who never since that time had shed blood, or made progress in the dreadful indifference to human life consequent on deeds of violence—he recoiled with horror from that which he was about to do.

Often when the restless day had been succeeded by the heavy slumber, consequent upon total exhaustion both of body and mind, would the meditations of the day take form in the dread visions of the night. The toppling houses and churches—the maimed and shat-

tered bodies of the slain would be present as in a terrible reality; and then a wild and piercing cry as of universal horror and detestation, would suddenly awaken him; the cold sweat bathing his limbs, his hair standing on end;—then would he start from his bed, suffocated as it were in his chamber, would hastily throw his clothes over him, and rush forth into the night.

There, in the silence of the midnight hour, the stars in their glittering courses keeping watch as the sentinels of heaven. Cast upon the earth, his thoughts all in confusion, would he again revolve the enterprise before him.

On the one hand, the magnificence of the plot, which should at a blow emancipate the suffering church, and avenge her upon her enemies—the wickedness of the times—the desperate prospects of the Catholics—excited in him all the enthusiasm of a hero and a martyr: On the other the streams of blood, the wide spread ruin, the shrieks of the innocent, and the dread judgment of God upon the murderer, appalled his trembling soul.

These agitations, these contrasts of feeling, became at last insupportable: he must have complete satisfaction—it was impossible to endure his state of mind longer: He must have more than the sanction of, and absolution from the hands of the inferior ministers of his church; these intolerable alternations must be resolved by a higher authority.

Father Tesmond, it was true, had received his confession. Father Tesmond had heard the minutest details of the plot, and from his hands he had received absolution. But Father Tesmond was a desperate and a violent man;

he was not wanting in a certain ability; but his views of morality were coarse and undistinguishing, and a mind like Catesby's found it impossible to rest satisfied with his decisions alone.

The Superior—the man of extended views, of great abilities, and extraordinary powers of argument, had, it is true, given his opinion in favour of any attempt which carried with it a fair chance of success, even though some innocent must perish with many “nocent;” but that opinion had been given under equivocal circumstances: with the details, even with the most general outline of the plan, he had distinctly refused to be made acquainted. It would seem by expressions which he let fall, that all he contemplated was a rising, like that of the North; and his decision might have reference only to the necessary violences of men engaged in open warfare.

The insupportable weight of responsibility attached to this new and unheard-of scheme, Father Darcy had not chosen to share; and now new and still more harassing doubts suggested themselves—Was it not possible that the Father Provincial might after all condemn the scheme, if made aware of its exact nature?

Father Darcy, or more properly Garnet, and Father Tesmond were together at White Webbes, the lone house upon the borders of Enfield Chase, which has been described early in this book as the place to which the Catholic gentlemen retired, after the ineffectual attempt to liberate the captive priests.

It was now the middle of summer, of July, in all its

glory. The Chase was one maze of wild roses and fox-gloves, intermingled with the heavy green of the embowering thickets. The sky was blue and cloudless, and the sun pouring down his rays with a bright intensity, not common in this climate. The two priests had retired to this secluded spot, to enjoy some refreshment after their various journeys; and were sitting in the little parlour with its high windows which excluded all view of the glorious face of nature without, still engaged at their mid-day repast. On the table there were some plates of fine fruit and confections, and a couple of bottles of excellent wine—for in this respect the Father Superior was a true epicure.

And he was sitting at his ease, lifting the glass in which the bright liquid was sparkling, from time to time to his eye, and swallowing it with a gusto that was any thing but edifying. Father Tesmond meanwhile with a disturbed and anxious countenance, sat picking his fruit in silence.

There was the noise as of a galloping horse approaching at a prodigious rate; both the priests started, looked at each other, and listened.

The ban-dog who lay chained close by the entrance, dozing in the sun, and snapping from time to time at the summer flies, started up and gave one fierce and savage bark; but the bark was succeeded by a low whining growl, as the dog appeared to resume his slumbers: it was evident that a friend was approaching. The heavy house door was slowly unbarred, opened, carefully barred again; then there was a knock at the door of the room in which the priests were sitting; the

latch was lifted, the face of the old servant-man appeared, and close behind him stalked the tall figure of Mr. Catesby.

They had not met for some months, and Garnet could not help starting back with surprise as he fixed his eyes upon him, so much was he altered in that brief space. His face had assumed an ashy hue; the cheek bones stood sharp and prominent, a crimson spot of fevered excitement upon each; his brows were scowling, and his deep, sunken dark eye glowed with a strange unnatural light; while his thick and neglected hair and beard fell in thick masses upon the large white collar of his rich but soiled dress. His whole appearance was that of one utterly indifferent to all those minor details and proprieties of life which occupy a mind at ease.

He flung his richly jewelled hat upon the floor, and drawing a chair without speaking, sat down, leaned his arms upon the table, and fixing his eyes upon the two priests, gazed alternately at one and the other with a steady, determined air.

The Father Superior was beginning to address him in his usual courteous manner, but Catesby haughtily and rudely interrupted him.

“My mind is like a burning hell within me,” said he; “the tortures of doubt and irresolution are no longer to be endured; I have ridden day and night from Ashby for satisfaction—satisfaction I will have, and that immediately.”

The two priests could only look on him with a sort of wondering astonishment; as on one who has suddenly lost his senses.

“ I do not go with you altogether, Mr. Catesby,” at last Garnet began. “ Excuse me, I do not understand the cause exactly, either of your hurried and heated appearance, or of your strange and somewhat uncourteous address. Satisfaction ! has any thing been omitted that could add to your satisfaction ? I am ignorant of the cause of these proceedings on your part.”

“ That is why I am come,” said Catesby, bluntly, “ you *are* ignorant, and I will suffer you to be ignorant no longer.”

The priest drew himself up.

“ Any confidences Mr. Catesby may be pleased to make under the seal of confession, I am bound by my ghostly character to receive. As for any other confidences with which he may desire to honour me, he must be pleased to suffer *me* to judge how far the reception of such may consist with my principles as a preacher of peace.”

Catesby frowned impatiently. There was something terrific in his frown, and the heart of the priest, who was not remarkable for personal courage, beat fast as he saw the cloud gathering over his countenance.

“ Peace !” he said, “ What has any man to do in these days with peace ? No, Mr. Darcy—Farmer—Garnet—whatsoever your proper name for the present may chance to be, you are not to retain that portion for yourself at the expense of the souls and consciences of others. My mind is dreadfully troubled. Except in general terms, you have till now refused to listen to the secret which oppresses me. I tell you at once, my conscience will not be satisfied ; it is like a raging wild

beast, and is tearing my heart to pieces: you *shall* hear all—I *will* learn, and from *you*, whither this road on which I have entered be leading—whether the suggestion be of God or of the devil—I will have satisfaction—and you *shall* give it me.”

“Sir,” said the Jesuit, “your language is violent and impetuous in the extreme: not such as I am accustomed to allow to be used to me.”

“I cry peccavi,” said Catesby, scarcely deigning to soften the harsh tones of his voice in the slightest degree, “but the occasion is extraordinary, and demands extraordinary proceedings. The question relating no less than to the slaughter of hundreds, may be thousands, of human beings totally unprepared—they may be guilty—may be innocent—may be righteous—may be criminal. The matter being, in brief, the explosion at once of some scores of barrels of gunpowder.”

The Jesuit clapped his hands to his ears:

“Silence!” said he, in a terrible voice, “or I instantly quit this room and this house; and never, while you breathe, will hold commerce with you more.”

And quite red with sudden passion, he was rising from his chair and about to leave the room.

But Mr. Tesmond, usually so hasty and violent, now assumed the part of mediator:

“Reverend father!—Holy father!” he began, “Have patience—Mr. Catesby—Mr. Catesby—you must not, indeed, do this violence to our reverend Superior’s determinations—be seated I pray you, father.—Mr. Catesby!

I am ready, as you well know, to listen to your confessions, and resolve your doubts."

"I have found it so," said Catesby, steadily, but with less violence, as the Father Superior, yielding to the earnest pressure of Father Tesmond's hand, resumed his seat. "I have had my doubts resolved by you, father, as far as you are able to resolve them. But you, I have long looked upon as one of *us*—your views may be biassed as my own may be. You are a bold and daring man, Mr. Tesmond, and I honour you for it: but the Father Superior is a man of peace. He has only heard in the general of some stir which we are about to make—his approbation is of no authority, it being given in ignorance of the fact—I must have his opinion—I *must* and *will* have my doubts resolved: or I cross the seas, join the Archduke, and leave this country to her fate."

"My son," said Mr. Darcy, who had now recovered his self-possession, and whom the last threat aroused at once to a sense of the necessity of the case, "though I do hold it a thing unlawful and inconsistent with my ghostly vocation, to enter into the details of warfare, however just and righteous the war carried on, yet for the satisfaction of one so justly esteemed as Mr. Catesby, I am willing to waive the point—but it must be on certain conditions: let the Father Tesmond, to whom you have opened yourself, consult me in this matter, *sub sigillo confessionis*: I will resolve the difficulties which may arise in your mind. Let it be so, my son, in the first instance," he continued, observing the im-

patient, dissatisfied expression of Mr. Catesby's countenance; "afterwards, if you do not receive complete satisfaction, we can discourse of the matter as in the general, and yet you will know how to give just weight to my opinions."

"Why may it not be from myself?" said Catesby, bluntly. "Why all this intermediate agency?"

"So it shall be," said Garnet, laying his hand with a pacifying gesture upon the twitching arm that lay upon the table, "should you still continue to desire it, I said I would receive your confessions, if you persist in desiring it—though not your ordinary confessor, I may be consulted as one extraordinary. But first let me hear Father Tesmond. Come, sir, shall we walk?" with a significant glance at the other priest, who rose immediately, and they quitted the room.

It had been Father Garnet's determined resolution to listen to none of the details of the plot directly from Catesby or any of the conspirators: his knowledge of it he had from the first resolved should remain a thing incapable of direct proof: he would not put it into the power of any lay man breathing, to tax him directly with it. As for the confession of the priest, though he would willingly have escaped that also, yet it was quite a different matter; the principles of the order rendered a system of lying and equivocation to shelter the proceedings of each other, a matter of such common everyday occurrence (though they might have startled the conscience of almost any lay man breathing), that he had no fear of being betrayed in that quarter.

These two priests then entered the wood, and walk-

ing up and down one of the sweet secluded glades, where the dappled deer were browsing peacefully, while the declining sun threw a golden gleam upon the forest trees—here, while the merry insects buzzed and drummed, and the voice of the all-wise and all-good was whispering to the swelling heart in nature's gentlest accents—those two priests, desecrating what they ought to have considered as one of the most sacred sacraments of their religion, discoursed upon this hideous conspiracy.

Mr. Garnet expressed neither surprise, nor horror, nor repugnance at what he heard. It is probable that he had approached the truth before this full development of the scheme; but the certainty that his surmises were verified, and above all the assurance that the necessary preparations had already been completed, was received with the greatest possible satisfaction. The only anxiety that remained with him was to maintain the susceptible mind of Catesby at the sticking place—to tranquillise his scruples, and confirm his resolution.

The enterprise, as now revealed to him, surpassed, it is true, the father's most sanguine expectations as to extent. The complete destruction, in one instant of time, of the whole frame of society as then constituted, was a scheme so gigantic in the conception, yet apparently so certain in its results, and so inevitably entailed the ultimate triumph of the Catholic ascendancy, that the father took several turns up and down the little green glade where they were walking, before he could sufficiently master his exultation so as to give words to what was passing in his mind.

“It is a grand—a sublime idea”—at length he said, “worthy of the man who has devised it. A genius so powerful and original as his, I have rarely found—but minds of this high order I have also observed to be usually a prey to certain delicate susceptibilities of nature, which arrest the progress, perplex the ideas, enfeeble the resolution, and disorder the whole plan of action. These wide-seeing natures cannot rush blindly hoodwinked forwards, like such men as Wright, Piercy, and Fawkes—but such hesitations and uncertainties are merely morbid—we shall find means to remove them. As for you, Tesmond, rest satisfied with the assurance that I most entirely approve of all that you have done—and rely upon me, I will take care so to make this thing appear at Rome, that we shall all go up justified—nay, glorified.

“Persevere in your endeavours to keep all these souls of whom you have charge to the point: I will deal with Mr. Catesby.”

Catesby had risen from his chair after the departure of the two priests, and his head resting upon his breast, and his arms folded over his bosom, continued pacing up and down the room, awaiting their return.

An hour had nearly expired before the door opened again, and Father Darcy entered. There was a serene gravity, an authority, upon his face, which was very imposing:—he possessed the power, when he pleased, of throwing into his countenance and figure a something gentle and mild, yet dignified and lofty,

which excited universal reverence and admiration. Catesby, as he lifted up his head, was struck with the air of seeming interest with which the father advanced towards him. His expression so grave and fervent, and imposing, as taking hold of his hand, he said, solemnly, in the words of the cxliv Psalm:

“ ‘ *Benedictus Domine*.—Blessed be the Lord my strength, who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.

“ ‘ My hope and my fortress, my castle and deliverer, my defender in whom I trust:

“ ‘ Bow thy heavens and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

“ ‘ Cast forth thy lightnings and tear them: shoot out thine arrows and consume them.’

“ This is a great and dangerous enterprise—but it is one holy and glorious in the sight of God. ‘ *Exurgat Deus*.—Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered.’ Your irresolutions are but too natural, the flesh is weak, the spirit strong. But go on, Robert Catesby—and the blessing of the holy Catholic Church, as expressed by my voice, be upon thee, and hallow thee to this great sacrifice.”

Robert was silent: awe-struck by the air of the priest, all his reluctance and his hesitations seemed at once to vanish. Again he looked as one inspired by the prospect of a great and saintly enterprise; again the fire of courage and genius flashed from his dark and terrible eye; again the deliverance of his holy Church at the peril of all he held dear in life, elevated his soul to a sort of rapture. As Judith when she raised the

glittering treacherous sword—as Jael when she struck the fatal nail and violated all the sacred rights of hospitality—so he must have felt. His excited feelings had undergone a complete reaction, the opinion of the Father Darcy as thus delivered, sounded to him as the voice of God.

“I marvel not at the reluctance, the hesitations, you have experienced,” continued the priest; “the deed though glorious, is terrible. You did well to consult the voice of your Church, Robert Catesby, and in her name I declare—not only that this undertaking is one of noble daring such as immortalises the conqueror, but it is righteous, holy, sacred, in the eyes of God and the innumerable host of heaven. Go forward then in faith; and like the mighty king of old, hallow the new temple erected to the honour of God, by the sacrifice of thousands of thousands.”

He then, with almost touching solemnity, administered the rite of absolution, and mingling his tears, his prayers, his blessing—yea his tears, for he had tears at will, and in good truth his own heart was greatly excited by the magnificence of the prospect before him—dismissed Catesby confirmed in his resolutions, and his heart lightened for the moment of an insupportable burden.

His feelings might yet vary with his varying spirits; but this and succeeding interviews with Mr. Darcy, who was now unremitting in his exertions, conspired to maintain him at the true pitch: till the habit of regarding the whole business as a righteous judgment upon heresy and treachery, and a most glorious example of self-sacrifice in a hallowed cause, became almost confirmed in his mind.

CHAPTER XIII.

“Ciò mi tormenta più che questo letto.”

Dante.

MR. DARCY had suffered himself to be made acquainted with the details of the plot, and he now bent the whole force of his powerful mind toward forwarding it in every possible manner.

More given to reflection than Catesby, more accustomed to consider the issues of things, he was not inclined to abandon the results of this terrible blow when effected, to the chances of accident; as the conspirators, in their blind reliance upon the support of the Catholic body, and in their now enthusiastic persuasion of the righteousness of their cause, and of the special protection of Heaven, seemed inclined to do.

Of the special protection of Heaven, Mr. Darcy thought little enough, and of the righteousness of the measure, he did not choose to think at all; his mind had been too long filled with schemes of mere worldly policy to be open to any genuine sentiments of religion or morality. His own moral sense had been totally blunted and destroyed by his casuistical habit of dealing with the consciences of others according to circumstance, instead of according to principle; and his religion had been destroyed by the fatal habit of assuming to himself

spiritual powers which he knew did not really exist; and of teaching to others many things, in which it was impossible a man of his enlightened turn of mind should himself believe. The pernicious institution also of auricular confession, whatever its effects may be upon the penitent, must inevitably produce the most baneful results upon the character of the confessor himself; and tend almost entirely to obliterate the finer sense of truth and sincerity, if not to destroy the principle altogether. To be every day of a man's life in the habit of hearing that which is never, under any condition, to be revealed: to know one thing, and have to act, and speak, and even look, as if under the firm conviction of another;—to be privy to so much secret crime, and have to wear the face of outward approbation, to be conscious of so much evil, and not to be allowed to move a finger to avert it; what dangerous perplexities, and conflicting duties, must from such a situation arise! But, above all, the fatal habit of tampering with his own mind, and classing circumstances and the obligations thence arising, not according to their intrinsic importance, but according to their revelation in or out of confession, must disorder the whole system of moral life within the bosom of that unhappy victim to false views of religion, the Catholic priest.

We may, however, spare ourselves from any useless pity for Mr. Darcy. He was a man of far too clear a perception, and too strong a character to be perverted, had he not chosen to pervert himself. But he had early surrendered his soul to the things of this world, and made his spiritual character a mere cloak for the most

innumerable enemies and the most selfish personal malignances. He had never been a good man: but he was by this time become a thoroughly bad one.

He now, as has been said, employed the whole force of his intellect in the furtherance of the mighty revolution he contemplated. And though he would not even now, as there is reason to believe, suffer Mr. Cagney to enter upon the subject of the plot itself with him—yet of the proceedings that would be necessary after the blow was struck, he discoursed freely, and with his usual ability.

It appeared to him imperative, that before the event some store of arms, ammunition, and above all of great horses which must mean horses of sufficient power to carry men in the heavy armour it was yet the custom to wear, should be provided; and a pretence be framed for collecting such military provision as could not be got together without exciting attention.

Mr. Fawkes had already crossed over to Flanders, to endeavour to obtain the co-operation of the Archduke, through the medium of Sir William Stanley and Owen, to both of whom, under the seal of secrecy, he was allowed to open the business. Sir William Stanley he did not see; with Owen he entered into a complete understanding; but he had no encouragement to depend upon the assistance of the Spaniard, who seemed, at present, determined to maintain the treaty of peace. But what the resolutions of Spain might become, after the catastrophe had taken place which would annihilate the Protestant government, remained to be seen. Mr. Fawkes returned to London about the end of

August; parliament having been again prorogued from the third of October to the *fifth of November*.

In the meantime, Garnet had written to Baldwin, the Legier,* as it was called, Jesuit in the Low Countries—to move the Marquis Spinola for a regiment of horse to be given to Mr. Catesby; under pretence of levying men and horses, for which military provision might be made and men enrolled, who would be in readiness when wanted.

These arrangements furnished a plausible excuse for the occupation, in which, with his usual ardour, Mr. Catesby immediately engaged. But the preparations consumed what little money he had left, after the large expenses already incurred; and yet the necessity of being well provided with funds, when the actual rising should take place, was evident to all.

Father Garnet, Mr. Catesby, Winter, and Piercy had numerous interviews at their various secret haunts to discuss this subject. Piercy, who was in the habit of receiving the rents for his kinsman, the Duke of Northumberland, proposed to detain the money that should next come to hand, and held out an expectation of being able to contribute four thousand pounds and ten galloping horses to the service.

But what was wanted was an immediate supply to complete the expensive preparations for Catesby's regiment. He proposed to apply to his mother: she had a very large jointure upon his estate, the Midsummer instalment of which had just become due. She had

* Legier—resident, representative, and agent at a foreign court.

likewise a considerable property in jewels and plate, which was in her son's possession. He made little doubt, though he and his mother were on somewhat indifferent terms, that he should be able to persuade her to assist him under pretence of the raising his regiment. As to giving a person so violent and unguarded the slightest suspicion of the matter really in hand—that was not to be thought of.

But he found himself entirely deceived in his expectations.

His mother had never loved him. There was something in the excited, susceptible, and highly imaginative character of her son, his uncontrollable spirit, and reckless conduct, in violent contrast to her own ideas and feelings. Rigid, stern, and cold in her exterior; narrow in her views; and accustomed to preserve the habit of austere and monotonous order in all her proceedings, though of a deep sensibility to wrong and suffering; there was nothing of sympathy between them.

And the harshness of her voice and manners—the indifference to his feelings and comforts which she showed whenever he happened to visit his gloomy home—had aided that severance from all the love and tenderness of domestic life, which, beginning with the bitter disappointment endured from the rejection of the Lady Gracc, was completed by this alienation from his mother.

His home was to him joyless and indifferent. When at Ashby, his time was chiefly spent in moody, solitary contemplation; rarely exchanging a word except

at meals with his mother, whose dissatisfaction was only increased by his want of confidence. But now it was become necessary to discuss the subject of the accommodation required, and he returned home to Ashby to enter at once upon the business.

He arrived one fine evening in August, traversing a country covered with corn-fields; and where the harvest, so joyous an event in those jocund days, was going on. The golden sheaves stood in ranks upon the rich fields, or nodded in the huge wains as they tottered heavily laden along; the laugh and the song resounded from the merry lads and lasses employed in reaping; and the sharp sounds of a fiddle from the neighbouring barn, the property of some itinerant musician, showed that preparation was already making for the rustic dance, which was to conclude the toil of the day.

“The valleys,” to use the emphatic language of a Scripture, “are covered over with corn, they shout for joy, they also sing.”

While Catesby, intent upon his fearful purpose, and heedless of the happiness of a society he hoped to rend asunder, galloped in his usual impetuous manner through the lanes, and between the embowering hedges that bordered them.

It was evening when he arrived, and crossed the brook and the green, round which the little cottages of the village of Ashby lie scattered. The men were playing at quoits upon the green; the young women with their scarlet top-knots and gay laced bodices were smiling, coquetting, and looking on; and there were matrons knitting and spinning under the trees, while the

children, busy at play, sailed their boats of leaves upon a little lake formed by the prattling stream.

The bells of the little church were ringing merrily for some holiday festival or other; as this man of misery, casting a hurried glance at the cheerful scene, hastened by, and arrived at his own door.

The low gloomy hall was wrapped in twilight; the thick trees obscured the rays of the sinking sun; and the strange figures painted upon the walls looked like lurid spectres, as the uncertain light now played, now retreated: he opened the door of the dark parlour—in melancholy contrast with the rich gladness of nature without—and there, in gloomy opposition to the scene of healthful enjoyment which he had just passed, were his mother, and his two little children.

The lady was engaged spinning at a wheel of wood as dark as ebony; and the monotonous hum of the wheel was the only sound to be heard; the two little boys, wrapped in each other's arms, had fallen asleep. They were both resting against the huge ban-dog, whose services had rendered him a permitted guest in any apartment in the house; and who was the kindest and almost the only friend the poor little fellows possessed. One little arm of each was thrown over the sagacious creature's neck, whose huge ferocious looking head reposed between them. The dog opened his large intelligent eye as Catesby entered; gave him one of those strange, meaning looks by which dogs convey so much, seeming to say, "You see what I am in charge of;" and then closing his eye-lids without moving a muscle, continued to doze between the slumbering children.

Catesby bent one knee to the earth, and kissed the forehead of each little sleeper: he loved them both in his way—but his cares for their welfare or happiness were slight. He never even observed their pale and suffering faces; the only feeling of compassion connected with them arose, when he remembered that he was putting the inheritance into jeopardy, which was to devolve upon the elder; but his confidence in the ultimate success of his undertaking was so complete, that such thoughts merely glanced at intervals across his mind.

He now went up to his mother, whose droning wheel had already ceased. She had arisen from her seat at his entrance, and a cold greeting was exchanged between them.

She reseated herself, while he drew a chair, and sat down at some little distance.

“I hope I see you well, son,” began the mother, with some formality. “This is an unexpected pleasure, the seeing you to-night. I thought you had been too busy with your *warlike preparations*,” with a sort of ironical emphasis, “to come near me.”

“I am sorry,” he said, “my warlike preparations as she pleases to call them, are so unpalatable to my mother; but I should have thought that when there was no enterprise in which a gentleman of honour could engage on this side the water—she would have been pleased to see her son preparing to serve in a Catholic army, and under a Catholic leader, upon the other.”

“Under the reign of the noble Phillip of pious memory,

when the Spaniard was the bulwark of the Church—under the generalship of the heroic Alva, when the demon of heresy was trampled under foot—when the Catholic scorned to show mercy to the impious, or hold out the right hand of fellowship to the enemies of God's holy Church—*then*, whatever the work left unattempted at home, the widow of the sainted Sir William Catesby might have rejoiced to see his father's son fighting under such banners—but now!”

“It is still a Catholic and a Spanish army,” said her son—“and the Marquis Spinola and the Archduke”

“Mention not their names to me!—Presume not to speak of them to *me*! The Spaniard has entered into an unholy league with this arch-traitor, this deceitful chief of a set of beggarly Scotch adventurers. Oh unworthy son of the sainted Mary!” lifting up her eyes, “Spain has lent itself to all the grievous oppressions, robberies, and outrages that this rascally bare-legged fellow's crew have inflicted upon us, and has not even once raised a voice for our relief. Talk not to me of the Spaniard! he is henceforth to be regarded as a mere spiritless time-serving renegade—and my son expects me to rejoice that he is about to enlist under *such* banners!”

“Mother, you were ever hasty in judgment, and impatient under suffering,” said Catesby, with some irritation; “the widow of Sir William Catesby might have learned to bide the time”—but, interrupting himself—“What is there better to be done? There is no stir to be expected in England. Are we not commanded to remain in peace? Such inaction is death to me; and I have no resource but in the foreign wars.”

“Commanded to remain in peace!” in a sarcastic tone. “The blood from whence you sprang, young man—the blood that flows in the veins of Throckmortons and Catesbys—was not wont to be so acquiescent in peaceable suggestions.”

“I repeat it,” said he; the dark colour rising to his hollow cheek; “and with that feeling of violent irritation which the slightest contradiction now produced, “that there is nothing to be done in England. I repeat it”—laying his wasted, sinewy, fevered hand upon the table before her, “that the life I at present lead is killing me by inches. To raise a regiment and serve under Spinola is what I have resolved to do—and I am come to ask you whether you will assist me with the means.”

“No,” said she, bluntly but decisively, “that will I not. You have chosen to waste your patrimony in a life of riot and disorder, and it is bootless to come to me. For the cause of God in England, every penny in my possession, ay, the very bread that was actually between my teeth, should have been offered as freely as I would offer a pin! But for the service of the treacherous Spaniard! no!—did I possess mountains of untold gold, not one poor mite should all your prayers or your reproaches wrest from me.”

He turned from her with a gesture of rage and contempt, which was not lost upon her.

“You understand me, I hope,” said she, still more angered, by his manner. “Not a doit, not a pennyweight, not a grain of gold, need Robert Catesby look for from me.”

— I was but a fool to ask any thing of any kind from such a mother as mine,” said he; “but, madam, I have been ~~sugra~~. perchance by you, or it may be by others, that where the necessity of the case justifies it, the old ~~chance~~ superstition of the rights of ~~meum~~ and ~~tuum~~ may be dispensed with. I do not very well see the justice of your receiving the better half of the rents of what is left of my father’s estates: to spend, I know not how, and care not how. The honour of his son is engaged for the proper ordering and furnishing of this regiment which he has pledged himself to raise; and the half year’s rent now received from the tenants, and which I was about to ask of you as a loan, to be repaid in due time, may”

“A loan to be repaid in due time!—aye—aye—aye; the offspring of Catesby and Throckmorton no doubt, is about to become a robber-soldier; to fatten his purse and retrieve the waste made during his scandalous and disorderly youth, by filching velvets and point laces from the burghers of the rich German towns. Will you set up shop and sell by the yard? How much an ell, good gentleman—cutpurse—soldier? How much an ell for Flinders lace?”

Catesby bit his lips—he looked at her sternly, then he said—

“Very well, madam, as it is not to be a loan, it may as well be a robbery at once. You will not look for your rents this midsummer: I have need of them. The offspring of the noble houses of Catesby and Throckmorton will not go like a base beggar to these wars, let it be how it may. Certain jewels and plate too, that

were never justly your own, are needed—Believe me, good mother, they will look better sparkling in the sun on the steel-clad breasts of brave men, than ever they did locked up in the strong-room at Catesby.”

“Take them if you will,” said the lady, scornfully, “and spend them in rioting with the mercenary soldiers of Spinola; I am told there is no stint either of wine or of dice in his camp. If by stretching out this forefinger I could snatch them out of your hand, I would not deign to do it. But as for these Midsummer rents, which you are pleased to make so sure of, they have, during your absence on some of your wild goose schemes, been all paid in to me. I have already said it. Not all your prayers shall wring one ducat from me in *such* a quarrel. I have said it, and the tortures of the rack, or the slow fire of the stake, should not draw a penny’s fee from me. Go your ways, Mr. Catesby; forsake your country; despise the holy cause of your religion and your God. My gold at least shall go for a better service, where these poor withered arms are useless.”

The crimson of rage forsook his cheek; he looked pale with anger, as between his shut teeth he muttered:

“You have got it all then?”

“Every stiver of it.”

“And you positively refuse,” violently seizing her arm, “to assist your son?”

“Have done, sir,” wresting her arm from his grasp. “Son! No son of mine! I have ever despised, and now I—”

“Madam,” said he, dropping his hold, and his manner suddenly changing to a sort of mournful solemnity, “if you were about to curse your son, you may spare yourself the pains—*that* is done already. I—”

Then turning away—

“I want nothing from you; I will now accept nothing from you. Keep your miserable gold, your hoard of plate and jewels; other means shall be found.”

And kneeling down, he kissed his slumbering children, whom, under the softened feeling of the moment, he could not help regarding as innocent victims about to be offered up for a cause, in devotion to which he was at that moment rending asunder the dearest ties of nature. Twice he stooped and kissed them, while his parched lips seemed striving to mutter a blessing—the little ones moved, but he started away, and without looking again at his mother, abruptly left the room.

The noise of his horse’s footsteps was heard echoing under the gate-house.

He never saw his mother or his children again.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ I thought of thee, my partner and my friend,
As being cast away—Vain sympathies!”

Wordsworth.

“ **MONEY—money!**” repeated Mr. Darcy, “ is indispensable. To attempt to raise it by a general contribution from the Catholic body would be to betray our secret; upon the absolute preservation of which the whole success of this great enterprise depends.

“ There is no help for it,” he continued, after a little consideration, “ one or two more, and these from among the most wealthy, must be called in—Men who will be able and willing to assist us in the present emergency. The blow once struck, and the whole Catholic body in arms, neither men nor money will be wanting, but money must be raised now. I repeat it—one or two of the most wealthy must be called in.”

Winter, who was looking out of the window, now turned round and said—“ There are few or none of those that are wealthy, and consequently well known, who would choose to have their names handed loosely about among the present confederates. Where such men as Keyes and Bates, and John and Kit Wright take a part, men will be distrustful—though we know them better.”

“ There is no necessity for their being in this intelli-

gence," said the priest. "Let Mr. Catesby call secretly on one or two—such as I will name to you by-and-by, without communicating the matter to the rest."

"That would not be honourable," said Winter. "That would be inconsistent with our oath."

The father looked somewhat contemptuously at him, as men of energy and action are wont to look, when some unexpected obstruction to their plans arises, from what they regard as mere childish scruples. But he knew Mr. Winter's plain way of thinking too well to venture to contradict his sentiments; he only said, "their consent might perhaps be obtained."

"Many," added Catesby, "may be content that I should know—who would not, therefore, that all the company should be acquainted with their names."

"It were a thing most easy to obtain that consent," said Winter, now coming up to the table, "for such is the opinion all these gentlemen hold of Mr. Catesby, that they love and respect him as their own life."

And he looked at his friend with that honest pride and affection which filled his heart.

Catesby made no reply to this remark; but a slight suffusion passed over his cheek, as he thought of the friends who so dearly loved him, and of the gulph into which he was about to lead them. He only said, addressing himself to Father Darcy,

"You, sir, are well acquainted with all the more eminent and wealthy members of our party. Who would you recommend to be dealt with. There is Mr. Talbot of Grafton—the Lord Windsor. . . ."

The priest shook his head negatively.

“I doubt whether your influence or mine, Mr. Catesby, would be sufficient to engage these gentlemen. I doubt not of their support in the sequel; but it is better to forbear handling the matter with them for the present. The fewer the better, for the plot hath already a somewhat too wide basis. I have thought of three—Ambrose Rookwood, Francis Tresham, and Everard Digby.”

“Digby!” exclaimed Catesby, “alas! no!”

“Rookwood,” continued the priest, paying no attention to the exclamation, “is ripe—his family have never forgiven the insult offered to one of its members in the time of the late queen. Mr. Catesby, this will be acceptable news for him, take my word for it. As for Francis Tresham, he is more doubtful. There is a caution about that young man which I do not quite understand; but his ability is great, his principles unquestionable (witness the late admirable book he has published upon some of the bearings of this question); he has a long account of his father’s, Sir Thomas Tresham, to settle with the government, and Francis is a pious son. Aye, aye, Francis is pious in his way. He is, moreover, very rich, and no niggard. As for”

“Digby!” again exclaimed Catesby, “let us have nothing to do with Digby.”

“And pray why not, sir?” said the priest, quietly; “what has Sir Everard Digby done, that he should be refused a share in this important matter? Why is Everard Digby to be excluded from participation in that crown prepared for those who greatly suffer in

the cause of heaven? You mistake the bent of Digby's mind altogether, Mr. Catesby. I have sounded its depths and shallows; he is greatly angered at the late proceedings, and at sundry cases of particular hardships which have fallen within his own observation. He is ripe for any enterprise, and will esteem it no proof of friendship on your part, Mr. Catesby, that he should be excluded from this. Besides, Tresham will never stir without Digby."

A picture of that terrace at Dry Stoke, as he had last seen it; the sun sinking behind the Rutlandshire hills; the blackbirds and thrushes singing in the brakes; and that bench under the large lime-tree; where Everard sat with Evelyn, her head leaning upon his shoulder, while he with his sweet tender eye was watching his little children at play—passed before the mental eye of Catesby, with all the distinctness of actual vision. And then the scene as suddenly changing, he saw his friend pale and faded; the gaping crowd, the gallows, the execution, the fire, the knife; and he turned away and again repeated, "Not Digby."

But he, who could have been persuaded, or have persuaded himself to what he had already done, was not long proof against the artful suggestions, special pleadings, and subtle insinuations of the priest.

Catesby was led to consent to the sacrifice of his friend—the sacrifice of his friend, we call it; but he had been persuaded into looking upon it in a somewhat different light.

It was a weeping day—a cold, cloudy day, at the very beginning of September. A sort of portentous gloom hung over the heavens. It rained heavily at intervals; at intervals the wind moaned gloomily round the house at Dry Stoke, while the dark inky clouds sailed slowly above the Rutlandshire hills; but the gloom without was only in too just accordance with the melancholy within.

In a small parlour which was appropriated to Evelyn's use, the family were assembled. Everard was sitting moodily over the fire, a book in his hand, reading; while at times, his finger in the pages, and the book on his knee, he seemed lost in meditation upon its contents. The book was a casuistical production, written by Francis Tresham; its title being *De Officio Principis*. It was a defence of rebellion against heretical governments, and treated of the duties, or rather how to dispense with the duties, of allegiance.

The sentence he was at that moment pondering over, was this:

“ Si princeps hæreticus sit, et obstinater ac pertinaciter intolerabilis, summi Pastoris divina potestate desonatur, et aliud caput constituatur, cui subdite se jungant, et legitimo ordini et auctoritate amoveant. Princeps indulgendo hæreticus non solum Deum offendit, sed perdit et regnum et gentem.”

Almost distracted by the increasing misery he saw around him, his thoughts running incessantly upon the means of relief, he had already begun to tamper with his long maintained principles of allegiance; and now his faded, anxious brow, and restless, painful expression of

countenance, betrayed the internal contest at work within. Leaning in his accustomed attitude, against the side of the window, was Fabian; his countenance had not entirely lost its peculiar expression of mingled silliness and sharpness, but there was a grave earnestness in it now, which almost redeemed it from the first characteristic, as his eye travelled from one group in the room to another.

The gentle Lady Digby, now grave, sad, and serious, was sitting upon a low chair, one little child upon her lap, the other standing against her knee. She was engaged in showing the little ones pictures of such pleasing natural objects as delight the childish eye; for, unlike the method pursued with the unhappy inmates at Ashby St. Legers, she wished to fill their young minds with pleasant ideas, and to excite their infant attention to the wonders of the beautiful world around them. She spoke in a hushed voice, and the little ones in whispers. Now and then she lifted up her head, and watched a figure, which rested upon a low couch standing near the chimney, where blazed a large fire.

In the face of the unhappy victim of disappointment, now apparently sinking into a slow decline, you could scarcely have distinguished the once beautiful and blooming Eleanor.

Her wasted form, her faded cheek, her failing spirits, all spoke the dire effect of that secret anguish which was wasting her away.

The blow which the priest had struck with so much indifference, had told but too well, and the information that Robert Catesby was raising a regiment of horse and

was about to depart for Flanders, had completed the catastrophe. 'The fond hopes she had till then cherished, vanished altogether; and she had sunk rapidly.

Everard was sitting by her side; every now and then, as she moved, he turned towards her to smooth her pillow, or arrange the cloak that was laid over her. At the back of the couch leaned John Digby.

The wind howled and roared, and now and then a splash of sudden rain beat with violence against the window; the sufferer shivered and started. The affectionate brothers bent over her, and again wrapped the cloak more closely; while Evelyn would raise her head, watch anxiously till she composed again, and then, casting a glance at the storm without, would stoop down and press her little ones closer to her.

The window looked out upon the front of the house; the bell at the large gate rang, the large gate banging and shaking in the wind was opened, and a man mounted upon a powerful horse galloped up to the door.

He was speedily admitted into the hall, the door of the sitting-room opened, and the serving-man without further ceremony ushered in Mr. Catesby.

He had not visited Dry Stoke for some time.

He came in as one assured of a welcome from his friend, but shaking with a strange sort of hurry and trepidation; and his face, whether heated by his ride or from some other cause, was all blotched over and discoloured. He wrung the hand of Everard with more than his usual feeling; gazed round the room; started as he saw the figure of Eleanor extended upon the couch; and his countenance assumed a still gloomier expression,

as he looked upon Evelyn and her little children. She had risen, and stood, her infant in her arms, and her little boy clinging to her robe, holding out her hand to welcome him. That he was the friend beloved by Everard, was sufficient to insure him a welcome from Evelyn. But John Digby fixed his black eye in an interrogating manner upon his face; and Fabian, whose presence no one seemed to perceive, watched every gesture with an air of most anxious interest.

“Will you not sit, Mr. Catesby?” said John Digby, presenting a chair, while the lips of Eleanor grew white as death. “What is the matter, Eleanor?” bending down over her.

“Oh nothing, nothing,” in a low, hoarse voice, “take no notice of me—I was only startled at his sudden entrance: take no heed of me, dear John.”

Catesby took no further notice of her presence than was indicated by his first start as he entered the room; his mind was raised to far too high a pitch to be sensible to the common interests of life.

He placed his hands upon the back of the chair which John Digby had offered, but did not sit down; he kept standing, and looking at Everard, and from Everard to his wife and children. That fiery eye melted to softness as he gazed; and while he suppressed a heavy sigh, the last cooling drop that ever was known to visit them, swelled between the eyelids as he gazed.

His manner was so strange, that both Everard and Evelyn stood watching him without speaking, waiting what should come next.

The pause might be for about three minutes; at last

he suddenly roused and seemed to recollect himself, and shaking off the sort of dreamy visionary feeling that had overpowered him, seated himself abruptly in the chair, and turning to Everard, said:

“It is a rough day, but I want you to ride with me.”

Evelyn cast her eyes in a sort of dumb remonstrance upon the window.

Everard was, as I have said, of a frame exquisitely susceptible to physical expressions. He had never been able to harden himself as other young men do, even to the action of the elements.

But he said at once:

“If it be upon business of any weight, you know, Robert, I do not heed a wet jacket.”

“A mutual friend of our’s desires a conference, and is not able to come to you. Will you ride with me, as soon as my horse has baited? We shall be at Rushton Hall before night. It is Francis Tresham who wants to see you.”

“It is a very bad day,” said Evelyn.

A fresh gust of wind and the clatter of rain pelting against the window.

Just such a day as Robert desired. He was anxious that his motions in connexion with Rushton Hall and Dry Stoke should be as little noticed as possible.

“Everard has a cloak, I suppose,” he said, bluntly. “The ride is not a long one; Francis has some business of importance on which he wishes to consult him; he is very urgent to see him this night at Rushton. You shall have him again, Lady Digby, to-morrow, we shall not detain him long. Everard,” with a stern and almost

"I would be very glad to see you dis-
posed to see me in a moment."

"I will go with you," said Evelyn. "John will you
take the carriage to see to my horses?"

"I will wait in the carriage," said Casby. "I
have been waiting for the moment in the same. The less
they know of me, the better the advantage. Casby's make
under their present miserable circumstances, the more
likely are they to escape unnoticed and thus preserve that
peace which is my duty. — upon which the
Father Superior's heart seems set. But if Edward will
lead me out in his galloping horses, it might be as well,
in my mind, that I will surely carry us fast enough
through the hall."

"I will do it," answered Edward, cheerfully: en-
tering the hall with the extraordinary weight almost
the same as before, which the arrival of Casby
seemed to have put in the spirit of all. "I will go and
get the horses. You shall ride Black Maria, and I will
ride the bay mare—we shall be at Boston by ten at
night and I will be with you again, my Evelyn, in the
morning when the time I wanted me for this gallop."

"I will go with you and look at your horses," said
Casby, who seemed to feel the very air of the chamber
oppressed and they left the room together.

Father Superior had been humming in a low voice
as he looked at the flying lines:

- The heavy clouds that fall sometimes
And stretch the skies.
Are like to stretch us of our time,
Which at the end our eyes

A glass wherein you may behold
Each storm that stops our breath,
Our bed the grave—our clothes like mould,
And sleep like dreadful death.”

The Lady Digby looked at him and said: “Those verses are melancholy, Fabian. You know I do not like such.”

“ Unhappy man! that runneth on thy race,
Not minding where thy crazed bones must rest;
But woe to thee that doth forget the place
Purchas't for thee to live among the blest.”

“ Don't let Everard go with him, lady.”

“ I cannot interfere with my husband's purposes,” said she, gravely; but a strange feeling of terror was creeping through her nerves. “ Nor do I understand what reason you have, Fabian, for your evil-omened songs. Pray let me have no more of them.”

“ I saw his face,” said Fabian, “ that is enough for me. Forgive me, madam, I have ever had the same foreboding about Mr. Catesby; he is the evil genius of my honourable master, who hath never reaped satisfaction, nay, rather, careful and anxious debatings within himself, from communication with that gentleman. And why should he come with that dark troubled visage of his to tempt my master to ride in such weather as this? Depend upon it, madam, there is evil abroad.

“ ‘ Leave in the world to looke for any love,
For on this earth is little faith to find;’

May our good, our best master, never live to rue the day he trusted to the love of Mr. Catesby.”

He was interrupted by the re-entrance of Everard. He came, as was his custom, to bid adieu to his wife, to

kiss his children, and embrace his sister, before he rode forth for any time.

The expression of his countenance was sweet and cheerful; he did not seem to be infected with the forebodings of the others; he was not sorry to dissipate the restless cogitations of the morning by a brisk ride upon a stormy day. It was touching to see the sweet, tender serenity of his countenance. His wife felt reassured by it; her melancholy dissipated; and she sat down cheerfully with her little ones again, to renew her talk with her clever little Kenelm. Eleanor again closed her eyes, and seemed to doze. But the jester turned his face to the window; and as he saw Everard mount his horse and ride forth with his usual spirit and alacrity, while the dark figure of Catesby might be seen issuing from the gate upon his coal-black steed—following him like some evil destiny—large tears, for which he might have found it difficult to render a reason, coursed like the rain drops down the window pane against which he was leaning.

The wind lulled, though the rain continued to fall heavily; the fire blazed cheerfully; the little children slumbered in their beds; the tender Evelyn sat holding Eleanor's hand till she seemed composed and slumbered too; the clock ticked in the hall, the church bell tolled eleven.

Then all retired to rest in that household, blessed of God and beloved of man; and the angel of peace, for the last time, brooded over it with his shrouding wings.

In the woods at Rushton stands a small, triangular summer-house.

It has stood there for centuries, it stands there still. It contains a room of a moderate size, and from within that room a subterranean passage descends, which communicates with the adjoining country.

Robert and Everard had ridden at the utmost speed to which they could urge their horses; Robert, it will be remembered was a desperate rider, and now he hurried on like the spectre horseman in the German tale. He clattered down the steep stony descent from Dry Stoke, crossed the valley, mounted the precipitous ascent by Rockingham Castle, and avoiding the great roads, by hollow and secluded lanes, pushed forward, until they arrived at a little brambly wood, so thick and so pathless, that it would seem no one had visited it for years. On the outside of this was a lonely field, in which stood a small, ruinous, wooden barn.

“Were you ever here before?” said Catesby, breaking silence now for the first time during a couple of hours.

“No,” said Digby, “I thought you wanted me at Rushton.”

“Those are the woods of Rushton,” said Robert, pointing to a long line of woods at no great distance; discernible by the pale light of a crescent moon wading among the black and lowering clouds. “Do you know where you are?”

“Not in the least, that is to say, I never certainly was here before, but I suppose we must be on the skirts of Rushton Park. Why all this mystery in your proceedings, Catesby?”

He made no answer, except by saying, "We had better leave our horses here."

And opening the gate, he led the way to the barn. It was an old, decaying place, which even the rats seemed to have deserted; fodder or provision there was, however, in some coarse rough hay.

Catesby shook down a little before the horses, and having fastened them as well as he could, he went out, carefully closing the door after him; then springing over a hedge which enclosed the thickets, he entered the wood, and began to force his way through the brambles and bushes, Everard following.

They proceeded about half a mile through this thicket, then they came to a very large holly tree, whose branches falling close to the ground, covered a very considerable extent. Catesby lifted up the branches, and made way for Everard to enter; there was a vacant space underneath the tree, covered with dead and decaying leaves. Having hastily cleared away some of these, a flat stone became visible; with some little difficulty Catesby lifted it up, and a flight of very narrow stairs, just broad enough for one man to pass down, appeared, leading to what seemed a dark vault beneath.

"We shall be better without a light," said Catesby; "go you down first, you cannot miss your way, for it is a narrow way enough; I will only close the trap, and follow you; when you come to a door, stop."

Everard did as he was directed, and Catesby, having carefully closed the trap, followed immediately. Some few small concealed openings in the roof of the passage admitted the faint light of the moon, serving but to

show the narrow dimensions of this low underground passage. Robert and Everard were both tall men, and could not walk upright in it.

“Go on,” said Catesby.

“Here is the door,” Everard replied.

“Is it fastened?”

“Yes.”

“Knock then.”

He did so.

A voice behind the door was heard. “Who’s there?”

“Answer,” said Catesby; “say Dry Stoke.”

The door was unclosed noiselessly, and they entered by what seemed a panel of the wall into the small apartment. The room was without lights, and would have been perfectly dark, but that through the trees and shrubs that hung around the window, the moon shed a pale reflection upon the floor; and by it the eye which had been accustomed to a yet deeper obscurity, might discern a small table standing in the centre of the room, with a book and a silver cup containing holy water upon it; three chairs were placed round, one of which was already occupied.

“I have not ventured to bring a light,” said the voice of Francis Tresham, “for the window of this summer-house is to be seen from many places; what we have to do, requires none. All that is necessary is, that Mr. Catesby should be satisfied that the book which lies upon the table is a primer, and that no deception shall be put upon him with regard to the oath he is about to administer.”

The contempt depicted upon Catesby's countenance at this speech, would have been visible enough had there been a light; he took up the book, however, and walking to the window, by the faint light of the moon, satisfied himself that it was the book in question.

Then returning to the table, he said, with some solemnity:

“Everard, I have loved thee as my own soul, and thou hast loved me—and now I am about to share with thee and with Tresham, the most tremendous secret that ever was imparted by man to man. But first you must swear never to betray, by word, look, or deed, the trust reposed in you; as I am ready to swear that your participation in this matter is known to no human being but Thomas Winter, Father Darcy, and myself.”

The oaths were then administered by Catesby to Everard and Tresham, and by Tresham to Catesby.

“Now let us sit down,” said Catesby.

They all did so.

And then one of his cold fits of remorse again stole over the wretched man, as he thought upon this young, noble, and confiding being, standing on the brink of that pit into which he was about to betray him; and a foreboding of the fate which awaited them all, sickened his heart. Not for himself, let justice be done even to him—but for his friends. Once or twice he looked wistfully at Everard, on whose face the beams from the moonlight were then falling, displaying the calm, gentle, and somewhat melancholy expression of a countenance, which was to Robert Catesby so dear and so

interesting; and then again his heart smote him, and dire visions of future anguish passed before him, and starting hastily from his chair, he rushed out into the night.

Loud roared the wind, the trees rocked and screeched in the gusts as they swept by, chasing the black heavy clouds across the heavens and over the face of the pale, sickly moon. A dreary night, black, and threatening, and in sympathy with his secret horror.

He hurried along, lifting up his clenched hands and haggard face from time to time, as if imploring Heaven—passionately imprecating from the Holy Virgin and sacred company of saints a something—he knew not well what he asked—a help in this hour of agony—then, as he vehemently offered up the sacrifice of this his last and dearest earthly friendship, once more, to his enthusiastic and excited fancy, the aspect of his purpose changed, the horror passed away, and was lost in a sort of glorious confusion of ideas of heroism, martyrdom, and victory. And so he returned to the summer house, where, his eyes darting with almost preternatural lustre, his heart trembling with agitation, but his cheek glowing with renewed colour, he prepared to vanquish by his reasonings the scruples of his friend.

What arguments he used to reconcile a heart so good, an understanding so clear, a temper so humane, to the dreadful scheme, remains a mystery. Some slight indication may be gathered from the letters and speeches of the unhappy victim after the catastrophe. His mind seems to have been blinded to the iniquity of the plot, by the persuasion that it would meet with the universal approbation and applause of the

Catholic body; and most especially and particularly of the priests; that it was a thing acceptable to God; and that this one effort, tremendous as were the means employed, would rescue the whole suffering body of the Catholic Church from the dreadful oppression under which they laboured, and restore the true religion to his country.

In spite of the excessive anxiety he shows to compromise no one, by his confession there can be no doubt but that the name and authority of Father Darcy were made powerful use of, to reconcile him to the scheme; but even the effect of this influence, great as it was, was small in comparison with the unaccountable personal influence exercised by Robert Catesby. The effect of which remains, alas! unquestionable.

The hazard he was incurring both for himself and those he loved, seems to have been present with him from the first; and the generous disinterestedness with which he risked every thing most dear for an object in which he had so little personal interest, appears to have blinded him in the most infatuated manner to the horrible iniquity of the deed.

Unhappy man!

Human life under some of its aspects exceeds the wildest creations of romance; and it is with a sort of shuddering incredulity that we consider a heart such as this, betrayed by false views and evil principles of religion into an abyss of crime so frightful.

Yet such is the o'er true tale.

The pen drops from my hand; I despair of delineating the picture.

I would rather you should follow him home, oppressed by the weight of his tremendous secret, and his heart bleeding inwardly at the thought of the perils to which he was exposing all those he so tenderly loved. I would wish to show him—his soul elevated almost to delirium with the enthusiasm of self-sacrifice, while his bosom is melting and overflowing with pity and tenderness. His wife, his loved, his idolised Evelyn, the tender partner of his bosom's cares, is now no longer allowed to share his thoughts. He is silent and reserved, and she feels that some important secret is withheld, and the first breach in their mutual confidence made. And yet how exquisitely sweet are his tones; how exquisitely tender that melancholy look of interest and love with which he regards her; how earnest the pressure with which he strains her to his bosom. His shoulder is watered with her silent tears—but his eye, alas! is never, never visited by one. His countenance is wasted as with intense but hidden fever: his eye has a wild distraction in it; and there is a dreadful expression upon his brow—strange visitant there!—that dark expression which is the seal of crime.

When his children are fondling at his feet, he often snatches one or other up, huddles it to his bosom, puts it down, turns away, and walks hurriedly up and down the room. Sometimes he sits by the side of his suffering Eleanor, soothing her by his words of ineffable kindness and affection; or more often lost in thought, and insensible to the presence of all, he is thrown back, his face covered by his hand, in his large elbow-chair. With his brother, John Digby,

there seemed at this time no exchange of sympathy or of affection; that calm, sober, reasonable John Digby.

Everard at once reverences and envies him.

The Fool was a witness of all this. His suspicions approached as nearly to the truth as was within the limits of possibility, but he dared not breathe a syllable upon the subject. One single hint, in the then state of things, might have sufficed to bring down the dreaded ruin at once upon their heads.

He used to lie by himself upon the floor of his little upper room, wrapped in his mantle, blubbering and sobbing like a child for hours.

“ Weepe not, but weepe, stint tears, shower cries,
Cease sorrowes, yet begin lament—
Weepe for your children and allies—
Weepe not for me, 'tis tears misspent;
Bewaile the offspring of your woombe;
Sentenced, succeeding vengeance, doome.”

CHAPTER XV.

“Cérbero, fiera crudele e diversa,
Con tre gole—”

Dante.

A FEW days after the fatal journey of Everard to Rushton, the Father Darcy again appeared at his table. He was this time as before dressed in the secular habit, and was attended by his servant Owen, or Little John, as he was sometimes called; a small, sharp, desperate looking, restless sort of fellow, who seemed as if he cared not very much for any thing in this world or the next, except it might be for bodily pains and privations, hunger or thirst. To the little power he possessed for enduring such things, it is perhaps owing that the world is in possession of the true character of Father Darcy *alias* Garnet, and is not to be deceived by the false lustre with which numbers of his party have endeavoured, not altogether without success, to illustrate his name, and blind the searching eye of history.

Evelyn had long learned to rejoice, like others, in the appearance of this man as the harbinger of peace and consolation—shall it be said of flattery? For exempt as this young creature was from self-conceit or arrogance, she was perhaps the less likely to stand proof against the adulations, insinuated rather than expressed, of a man so highly regarded and esteemed by every

one around her; both on account of his intellectual qualities, and exemplary piety.

The Father, who had been apt to forget himself at times, we have once or twice seen, and to make a step in the wrong direction, had taken some pains also to efface from the mind of Eleanor, the recollection of the cruel conversation at Harroden. But, with all his art, he had not altogether succeeded. Eleanor was of a deeply resentful temper. She had been accustomed to look up to her director as her best and only friend; to derive encouragement from the false hope he held out, and consolation from his flatteries; and the sudden and unexpected tone of severity in which he had indulged, had told with a force of which he was little aware. For he was of too cold a temper himself to calculate to its full extent the power of genuine and enthusiastic passion.

He had long held, as he thought, all these young hearts like wax in his hands, to mould them at will to his purposes—but there were moments when honest nature was too strong even for him, and by her revolt avenged her violated rights.

Ever since that day, therefore, Eleanor had received Father Darcy with gloom and sullenness; her manner, though submissive and reverential, was cold. She answered when he spoke with a certain forced deference, but her replies were brief, her words pointed, almost sarcastic. Evelyn and Everard remarked this change in her behaviour, but attributed it to the caprice of illness—to the true cause of which they were still blinded; attributing it to that fever on the spirits, or one of that long category of nervous diseases, as to the

nature of which men were then so ignorant that the best informed most often could attribute them, only to the influence of the demon, or to witchcraft.

Mr. Darcy continued to conduct himself under these circumstances, so as to insure the esteem of the friends he desired to please; and while Eleanor, in spite of all her feelings of rebellion, trembled and shook with terror when she caught, unperceived by others, the stern look of the unpitying director—Evelyn and Everard were both the dupes of his apparent gentleness and tender concern for the sufferer.

It was late in the evening when the father made his appearance—about eight o'clock—when the family were about to sit down to supper. The night was dark, and he entered at a postern-gate, so that he was ushered into the parlour without being expected.

Everard, his head resting upon his hand, his eyes fixed upon the table, lost in one of his late deep fits of musing, sat with his supper untasted before him; his affectionate wife, equally anxious and still more restless, had fixed her eyes upon him, and was watching him with a look of the tenderest interest.

John Digby and Eleanor were both finishing their meal in silence when the father entered.

Evelyn had been used of late to receive his visits with joy; he always appeared to succeed in soothing the troubled mind of her husband: and with a slight exclamation of pleasure and surprise, she rose from her seat and offered him her hand.

But the face of the father was darkened, his brow clouded, and his eye filled with unusual melancholy

and sadness. Evelyn dropped his hand as the rest approached to salute him, and disappointed returned to her place at the table.

“It is kind of you, Mr. Farmer,” for that was the name by which he was known among the servants at Dry Stoke. “It is very kind of you, Mr. Farmer,” said Everard, endeavouring to assume an air of easy hospitality before his household, “to call in upon us this night. Your affairs, no doubt, lead you into Yorkshire, where I am told the cattle fairs will be better attended than usual this year. Have you large orders on the part of the lords and gentlemen at present? The passion for hunting, which seems to engage his majesty, will make the courtiers turn all their arable land into forest, or deer park, it is said, before long.”

“In consequence of which,” replied the father with a smile, taking his seat by Everard, at the bottom of the table, “I have large orders. There is such wassail kept at the court of our royal and royally carousing king and master, that beef and ale will be at a premium in London this year. Nothing is to be heard talk of but feasts and junkettings, and carousals loud and long—from which banquettings the beauteous sex,” turning to Evelyn and Eleanor, “is not excluded. What think the fair saints of Dry Stoke, of queens and ladies rolling in their cups upon the floor? Our importations from Scotland, whether of men or of manners, are rare in all ways—but the droves of Highland beeves which come to the Yorkshire markets, are some compensation to men of my calling.”

While the servants continued in attendance, such

was the talk; and Mr. Farmer affected an ease and cheerfulness, which harmonised very ill with the expression of his countenance. As soon as they were gone and the door closed, he turned to the two ladies and John Digby, and said significantly: "The secrets of my trade, you know, are not to be lightly communicated to those who are without. I have some talk to hold with Sir Everard, on the subject of these Highland droves that are constantly crossing the borders to graze in the fat pastures of England. May I," with a polite bend to Evelyn, "in indulgence to the peculiar occasion, crave the use of this parlour for ourselves—a space?"

They all rose and left the room. Evelyn retired to her children's apartment, Eleanor and John went into the hall, and began to walk up and down it together.

"How I detest," said John Digby, "all this system of pretendings and deceivings. How can Everard lend himself to such things? Does he think to deceive his servants by these tricks? As if every one of them did not see through it all as clearly as crystal.—*He!* a Yorkshire salesman! Why that extremely delicate white hand of his which he is so fond to display, with its jewel upon the little finger, would be sufficient to betray him. Eleanor, my flesh creeps at that man—and what you can all see in him I cannot guess?"

"Hush—hush!" said she, looking in a fearful manner round, "if he should hear us!"

"And what if he did?—What harm could he do us?"

She again looked round and trembled a little.

“ Ah, holy saints! How daringly you talk; hath he not the power of the keys?”

“ No,” said John, bluntly, “ the keys are in the hands of one only—the holy Roman father. These men take too much upon themselves.”

She again looked round—during the whole of the ensuing conversation, she spoke and acted like one in terror of some invisible power that was present in all places, and could listen even in the most secret chambers.

“ For the love of the Holy Virgin! take care what you are saying, John—this man can read the inmost secret of the heart—and where he thinks fit to punish for presumption!—Oh Queen of Heaven!”

“ He is your director, Eleanor—thank Heaven he is not mine. I am in the hands of a plain old fellow of the other party, and of the days gone by; but when he is dead, and he cannot last long, what is to become of me? I must put myself under the care of some of these new priests, sooner or later; but Farmer, or that black-visaged Tesmond, or that little sharp knave of a Father Gerard, or any one among them all, of those that come here, it shall never be—of that you may make sure, Eleanor.”

“ Take care—take care what you say,” in a low, trembling voice.

“ I defy them all,” said John, “ and I only wish . . .”

“ What—what?”

“ Why, that the laws of our good queen of glorious memory had run their course, and that we had never seen Jesuit or missionary priest in the land.”

The answer was a heavy sigh.

Then she said in a whisper:

“ John, what did you think of Robert Catesby’s hurried visit the other night?”

“ What the Fool did,” said John.

“ Don’t give me such answers,” said she, rather impatiently. “ Why will you make sport of me? I am in no humour for nonsense.”

“ It’s no nonsense; the Fool has the best head amongst us; I would rather follow the Fool than the Jesuit any day, or than the Jesuit’s dupe—our loved, our honoured, our excellent Everard,” added he, with a slight change in his voice.

“ And what says the fool?”

“ ‘ The fortune of a stage (like fortune’s self),
Amazeth greater judgments; and none knows,
The hidden causes of those strange effects;
That rise from this hell, or fall from this heaven.’ ”

“ That is like all Fabian’s dark sentences,” said she, contemptuously, “ it just to me means nothing at all.”

“ Do you understand this better, then?” said her brother.

“ ‘ Then for thy partners’ and thy children’s sake
Tender my suit: bequeath not to their lot
The shame, that from them no device can take,
The blemish that will never be forgot.’ ”

“ Not one whit better,” said she.

“ Then take it in plain prose.—God send Everard a better counsellor.”

The result of the conference between Father Darcy and Everard was a determination on his part to leave

Dry Stoke with his family, and repair to Goddeshurst, as lying more conveniently in the way for carrying out the part allotted to himself in the undertaking.

The father had spared no pains to encourage Everard in the course he had adopted; he praised his generous resolution, exhorted him to perseverance, and assured him the undertaking was one that would find favour in the eyes of God and man, being entirely justified by the necessity of the case. He inveighed with a force and an asperity which their conduct but too well justified, against the tergiversations of the leading Protestant noblemen, against their base subservience before their odious and contemptible king, against the grossness and dissoluteness of manners now prevailing, till he wound up the susceptible mind of his hearer to a pitch of the most indignant abhorrence.

He did not forget to enlarge upon the dangers the conspirators incurred; nor upon the vengeance that would be heaped upon them by an enraged government if discovered; and dwelt upon the noble sacrifice of life and estate, and house and family, for a cause in which they had no private interest, nor the slightest personal object in view; till the heart of Everard beat high with generous ardour, at the idea of the disinterested sacrifice, and of sharing the dangers of Robert Catesby.

“My love for Mr. Catesby, whom I honoured and loved more than any man living,” he acknowledged afterwards to have been one principal motive which impelled him to this fatal crime.

But Father Darcy had yet another object to accomplish in this visit to Dry Stoke.

Parliament had been prorogued to October 3rd; on that day it was expected to meet. His intention was to hold himself apart from the immediate scene of action at the time; thus retaining to himself the power to acknowledge or deny the share he had taken in it as circumstances might render advisable.

There appears to have been policy on his part, rather than superstition, in the plan he at the moment formed for a solemn pilgrimage to St. Winifred's Well, in Flintshire, to be undertaken by the principal Catholic ladies. He probably thought it prudent to occupy some in this way, whose restless zeal and curiosity might render them dangerous observers at such a moment; when to prevent the slightest suspicion and keep every thing profoundly quiet, was the great object to be pursued; for nothing but imprudence on the part of some who were in the secret, or some uncalled-for display of sentiment on the part of any of the general body of the Catholics which might excite extraordinary vigilance on the part of the government, could now, as he thought, prevent the well-planned conspiracy from taking effect.

Things will, however, take wind.

In spite of every precaution a slight smoke will arise where there is much fire: yet never, perhaps, in the history of man had conspiracy been so long and so successfully hidden as this. It was now eighteen months since the design had first been agitated; nearly twelve since the mine had been begun; and yet, save some vague rumours of a stir that might be expected among the Catholics, which had reached them from Flanders, not

the slightest suspicion of the truth had visited the Council: nor, except a sort of vague hope and expectation that something after all would be attempted, had spread among the Catholics themselves.

But husbands had been of late admitted into the secret, men tenderly attached to and under the influence of wives; and those wives being sincerely devoted to the Catholic interest, their presence was at that moment, perhaps, only the more dangerous.

The judicious Father Darcy would have more willingly trusted the discretion of these young men had their wives been Protestant, and manifestly inimical to the great cause: but he knew human nature well, and the excuses it can render to itself for what it is tempted to do. And to open the heart to those who so sincerely sympathised in all their religious and political feelings, was a species of indulgence apparently as consonant to reason as to inclination. So the father determined upon persuading all these ladies to the pilgrimage.

The next morning he explained to Evelyn the cause of her husband's melancholy, and of his own gloom and uneasiness; attributing it to the shocking bills, which he assured her he knew from unquestionable authority, were to be presented to the ensuing parliament. He preached submission as usual; but suggested, that by a general act of humiliation, and by the performance of pious ceremonies, the impending wrath of Heaven (called down, perhaps, by a too general neglect, among the English Catholics, of such

observances,) might be averted ; and the saints be moved to assist with their prayers their suffering brethren upon earth.

Unhappiness is apt to engender superstition.

Evelyn, educated though she had been in the liberal and just views of her father, began, anxious and wretched as she felt, to ask herself whether such views as his were altogether right. Whether, in his opposition to the general voice and practice of the church for centuries, in his contempt for *agnus dei* relics, pilgrimages, things which Mr. Darcy and those who acted with him regarded as so efficacious and holy, his ideas might not have been in some degree misled by the teachings of that old school of Anglo-Catholic divinity, the doctrines of which were now by the universal church regarded as verging upon heresy.

She was unhappy: she had no brave mental counsellor to bid her have faith, to bid her lift her eyes to the Father of all, and stand courageously by the offering of an honest heart, purged from such vain devices. She suffered; and her ideas were all in confusion.

She felt quite alone, as if a mysterious veil had fallen and separated her, as it were, from her husband's heart. She was bewildered—she was miserable. Might not a humble pilgrimage to the consecrated well—her feet cut by the flinty stones, her tears falling humbly on the dust—move the pity of that heavenly mother, so gentle and pitying to sorrow? Should *she* be absent when so many other Catholic ladies, her friends and her usual companions, were uniting in this peaceful offering of humble piety?

Father Darcy prevailed.

And the daughter of Mr. Mulsho undertook a pilgrimage to St. Winifred's Well.

The pilgrims were to assemble at Goddeshurst, and orders were give for the family of Sir Everard Digby to remove there in two days.

His eye was bent fondly upon her, as they walked up and down the sitting-room. She had been telling him of her determination; had confessed her anxieties; acknowledged her superstition, and her weakness; and her desire to make one in this pilgrimage.

"Aye, go," he said, "my sweet one. It may be—who can tell? the simple, humble piety of innocents, like thee, may yet move the host of Heaven, and this cup," he said, in a tone of the deepest melancholy, "may be passed from us; but," he added with solemn fervour, in the awful words of Scripture—" 'If this cup may not pass from me unless I drink it, thy will be done.' "

"Everard," said Evelyn, lifting her head from his bosom on which it was resting, disengaging herself from his arms, and looking at him steadily and seriously: "something more than common is the matter with you. You have a secret, and you keep it from your wife."

He answered the expression of her eye with a certain air of stern determination, such as never had met an appeal of hers before.

"And had I so? Does it belong to the wife of an honourable man to endeavour to read it? I have loved you, Evelyn; I have trusted you," said he, gravely; "but

take care how you endeavour to pry into that hidden chamber, if such there be, of which your husband withholds the key. Your curiosity is womanly and weak. I will not gratify it so far as even to declare that I *have* no secret. Your discretion should prevent your urging your husband even to the necessity of an avowal such as that."

He turned away from her, and without uttering one word more left the room.

While she, amazed and bewildered at this new and unexpected reproof, stood trembling and changing colour in the place where he had left her.

But the severity, if severe he were, was but the severity of a moment. With the gentle kindness of an angel did Everard from that moment strive, as it appeared, to atone for the momentary harshness. Evelyn, even during her exquisitely happy life of marriage, seemed yet to have been a stranger to the full treasures of tenderness possessed by that heart.

The sweetness of these last hours of affection seemed rendered still more deeply penetrating, by the profound melancholy which seemed to lie at the root of it.

" Oh happiness, enjoy'd but of a few !
And if possess'd, as soon decay'd and done,
As is the morning's silver melting dew,
Against the golden splendour of the sun."

CHAPTER XVI.

“ But thou, my sister, doomed to be
The last leaf which, by Heaven’s decree,
Must hang upon a blighted tree,
Be strong”——

Wordsworth.

How holy is autumn!—holy as old age. What a calm and religious stillness pervades the woods!—when the busy life of the summer is over, and in all the calm serene beauty of its decay, the year prepares to sink into the wasting arms of death.

How pure and still was the air! how lovely the face of nature! how imposing the brown horrors of those fading woods, through which, in her coach with her husband, and her two little children, Evelyn pursued her way to Goddeshurst.

Ah! often, in the dark terrors of those miserable nights which she, unhappy one, was afterwards destined to spend, would she start from her troubled slumber; those words, that hour of peace, had been in her dreams; that hand had pressed hers—those looks of sweetest tenderness and affection had met hers; the little children lay asleep in their arms; they passed amid those lonely hills, and through those brown and quiet woods—and her faltering heart kept asking, why was she not happy?—And then a horrid change comes over her dream—the trampling crowds, the black, threatening scaffold—and he, the adored, the idolised of her heart!—

Oh, Father of Heaven!—oh, Christ!—oh, Virgin Mother of God—oh, mercy—mercy—mercy!

There was a large company assembled at Goddeshurst. Father Darcy was there to direct and accompany the pilgrims—that tender, pious, and fatherly man. His heart seemed unruffled by the vain anxieties of this short fleeting world. With the simplicity and innocence of a child was he endeavouring to direct the hearts of his flock to that better country, where all the hopes of the children of God should rest.

He spoke of the worthlessness of sublunary things; of the debasing nature of earthly cares; of that peace which visits the heart of the just; and of that devotion which offers to Heaven its all—not only its heart, its life, but all those smaller acts of piety and observance, which the Lord of the Universe condescends to accept from his children. He spoke till the hearts of his auditors were rapt and melted within them; he spoke till the sweet colour glowed on the faded cheek of Grace Vaux, as her eyes were rivetted upon the speaker; till the worthy and simple-hearted Mrs. Brooksby, sister of that beauteous votary, burst into tears; till the eye of Evelyn kindled, and her heart beat high.

And he all this time, if we may believe himself, suffered agonies under the weight of his insupportable secret; and awoke in the mornings bathed in a cold sweat, from those frightful visions of the night which had displayed the coming destruction in all its terror. A destruction which he—certainly little blinded by reli-

gious zeal—of which he possessed no great share—never moved a finger to avert.

The rest were animated by an almost delirious paroxysm of enthusiastic self-devotion; he knew of no such things. “We did observe,” said a witness upon his trial, who had listened to his conversations with Oldcorne, another Jesuit, when imprisoned under charge of high treason in the Tower, “that from the beginning to the ending of the conference, neither of them named God, or recommended their cause or themselves to God, but applied themselves wholly to the matter.”

Grace Vaux, perhaps one of the most deeply to be lamented of the numerous victims of this false shepherd, was now become a mere visionary devotee. In company with her sister, Mrs. Brooksby, and her sister's husband, she waited upon and attended Garnet in all his journeys and different sojourns, whether at the houses purchased by the Jesuits, or at those of the Catholic gentry; ministering to his comforts with a duteous observance which could have rivalled that of the most pious of daughters. Her natural feelings diverted from their true course, all her strong and ardent affections were devoted to the ghostly father of her spiritual life, whom she regarded with a reverence approaching almost to idolatry.

The father, who little practised the self-command he exacted from others, had not been proof against the temptation of confiding to Grace Vaux that some tremendous conspiracy was in agitation; nor could he resist the pleasure of allowing her secretly to participate in his

triumphant anticipations when any new act of oppression on the part of the government excited the muttered execrations of his party. At those times it was a gratification to be able to exchange looks of meaning with this "sister in the church," as he called her; while she, the once tender Grace Vaux, her character all perverted, felt her heart shudder with unhallowed pleasure, as she thought of the dreadful day of reckoning.

The pilgrims consisted of a company of about thirty persons in all. They were to proceed by Daventry to John Grant's, at Norbrook, thence to Robert Winter's, at Huddington, and so by Shrewsbury, to Flintshire.

The houses of all the conspirators were thus cleared of their female relations; a few of the more weak and violent among the men, among their intimate connexions, being also of the party; and thus were the rest left at liberty to spend the time together, and ripen their plans at each other's houses, without being exposed to the dangerous casualties of domestic life.

The pilgrims, unlike the pilgrims of Chaucer, travelled in their coaches till they reached Holt, in Flintshire, from whence the real pilgrimage began; and with bare bleeding feet the remainder of the way was completed.

Many a heavy heart was there, and many a tear of deep devotion shed; and, with the spirit of many a poor simple creature consoled by this romantic act of

piety, after the absence of about a fortnight they returned home.

In the meantime, how had it been with the others? Ever since that evening when they had met in the summer-house at Rushton Hall, how had the world changed its aspect to many of them!

Catesby, ever since that fatal hour when he had brought Digby and Tresham into the conspiracy, was a changed man—a foreboding of disaster, it is said, from that moment haunted him; his imagination was filled with the direst images, and at times he was a victim of the most miserable despondency. A deep-seated distrust of Tresham, and bitter regret at having intrusted him with the secret, was what he confided to Winter, as the cause of his uneasiness; but the demon of remorse that haunted him arose from the recollection of Digby. Of Everard—the excellent Everard, betrayed through the influence of a devoted attachment to himself into so dreadful a situation! The simple faith in the meritorious nature of the action which led Everard, once engaged, to enter into it with his whole heart; this contrast between the simple confidence of his friend and his own irresolution, hesitations, and remorse, moved him deeply. He felt the remorse of one who had betrayed an innocent child.

Everard's simple security; his faith in the purity of his own motives; his faith in the righteousness of the cause in which he was engaged; his confidence in the rectitude of his friends—in the approbation of the whole

Catholic world; contrasted but too sadly with his own uncertain motives—the pride, the revenge, the ambition, the love of violence, which mingled with his better purposes. But he strove to harden his heart against such reflections. Much of his time was spent in the secret consultations at the house on Enfield Chase, where so many meetings had before been held. There Catesby, Winter, Fawkes, Sir Everard and the others met repeatedly, and discussed their future proceedings. Fawkes, whose tried courage and unflinching resolution had inspired his companions with the utmost confidence, volunteered, and was accepted, as the person best fitted for the perilous enterprise of firing the mine. A train was to be laid, which he calculated would allow him one quarter of an hour to escape; he was to immediately go on board a small ship waiting in the Thames, and thence directly sail for Flanders to procure succours.

On the 5th of November—the fatal day—Sir Everard was to assemble as large a party as possible of his friends at Dunchurch, under the pretence of a grand hunting match on the wild heath of Dunsmoor. Thence they were to proceed to raise the country, and to seize upon the Princess Elizabeth then residing at Lord Harrington's in the neighbourhood. They were afterwards to proceed in a body to Warwick Castle; take possession of the horses there; and thence to Whewell Grange, in Worcestershire, the house of the Lord Windsor, where there was a large store of armour, and arms, and ammunition.

“And by that time,” said Catesby, “I hope some friends will come and take our parts.”

While Catesby, Winter, Fawkes, and the two Wrights thus settled the plan of proceedings, sitting round the little oaken table in that twilight parlour at White Webbes, Everard, his hat pulled over his brow, paced up and down the room in thoughtful silence. At last he came up to the table and said,

“However well my conscience has been satisfied with the respect to the destruction at one blow of this unrighteous king and most wicked government—yet I am uneasy at the very great peril into which some of our best friends, Catholic gentlemen of high blood and great piety, shall be placed. You have said that ‘tricks shall be put upon them all’ to prevent their attending at this parliament—but how and they should fail? It seems to me that the blood of one of such men were more than enough to extinguish the whole glory of the enterprise”

The gentlemen present looked significantly at each other. Fawkes said—

“Sir Everard Digby hath not served, it would appear, or he would know that many are commanded to the inevitable breach who are from among the most gallant of the army. What is human life of account, except to be perilled in enterprises of moment! And yet, methinks, the Lord Montague should be spared; he is a nobleman of great worth and courage, and the loss of his services would be fatal to the cause.”

• Piercy spoke for his kinsman, the great Earl of Northumberland; Keyes for Lord Mordaunt, his friend and patron; most of them for the young Earl of Arundel. While Everard shuddered to see the question of the life

and death of men so revered, thrown into the balance and weighed against other considerations, when he was for saving every one of them.

But Catesby, irritated and angry, said in a low tone to Winter, "That he made as much account of the nobility, one and all, as of so many atheists, fools, and cowards," adding, looking round him, "that lusty bodies would be better for the commonwealth than they."*

Whatever their own secret intentions, they contrived, however, to soothe and pacify the scruples of Everard, "Divers were to have been brought out of danger..." says he, in a letter to his wife. "I do not think there would have been three worth saving that would have been lost." But when Everard had quitted the company to return homewards to Goddeshurst, the conspirators came to very different resolutions. The manifest risk of discovery which would arise from any thing like a general warning being given to the Catholic members of both houses, decided them against any attempt of the kind. "We durst not forewarn them," said Fawkes, in his confession, "for fear we should be discovered; we meant principally to have respected our own safety, and would have prayed for them."

They however, it appears, agreed among themselves to dissuade such of their friends as they could privately influence, to forbear attendance upon this parliament; under pretence that little good could be done by so small and uninfluential a body in resisting the intended enactments.

* Historical.

Sir Everard had left White Webbes satisfied that every exertion would be made to save, not only the personal friends of the conspirators, but every man unconcerned in those persecutions for which he considered this tremendous blow in the light of a righteous judgment and punishment—but not so Tresham.

He was an older and a more experienced man than Everard; and of a temper far less simple and confiding. At a second meeting at White Webbes, where were present only Catesby, Thomas Winter, Fawkes, and himself, he passionately enlarged upon the tremendous destruction awaiting those of their own faith and party; and insisted vehemently that warning should be given to the Lord Mounteagle, his kinsman—an old associate of their own—who, it is certain, had entered largely into the former transactions with Spain, in regard to the succession of the Infanta.

Terror for himself—for the risk he ran in his own life and fortunes—had mingled with the natural horror which the whole scheme upon reflection excited in his mind. The very coldness of his temper led him to perceive its full enormity; a thing hidden from the rest, by their ardent fanaticism and excited imaginations and passions. He stood at the head of the table arguing and representing, with a vehemence and earnestness of emotion common to men of cold tempers when once thoroughly aroused. He painted in the most alarming colours the perils of the enterprise, the frightful destruction which would ensue, and the detestation which would pursue their names and memories to eternity.

“ Besides,” he said, “ the money that I have promised

to advance, and which is indispensable to the furtherance of this enterprise, cannot possibly be forthcoming at the time. I must dispose of the outlying estates in Northamptonshire, and these times are unfavourable. There is a rumour of discontents afloat, which disinclines men to be purchasers: better delay this enterprise till a later day. Why not the day of prorogation or dissolution instead of that of the opening of parliament? Retire to Flanders; my purse, my interest, shall be yours, Catesby; draw upon me for what you will."

"It was the only way I could resolve on," as he afterwards confessed, "to save their lives, and to preserve my own fortunes, life, and reputation."

The three gentlemen sat observing his passionate gestures, the tears starting into his eyes; and they listened to his broken and earnest discourse in profound silence.

The eyes of each were fixed upon the speaker with a sort of gloomy attention—they listened, but the expression of their countenances showed that they were not in the least persuaded.

The face of Catesby grew darker and darker. A sort of heavy cloud of settled despair was gathering slowly over his brow and eyes—but it was a dogged despair; there was nothing in it of relenting or hesitation. It told that he was beginning to look upon his enterprise as lost; but that he did not on that account, in the least degree, waver in his resolution. What love and pity for Everard had been powerless to effect, it was not given to the eloquence of Tresham to accomplish.

When Tresham ceased—

Robert turned to Winter, and said, in a voice that was almost a whisper—

“ You see how it is: my heart foreboded it: that man is to me as the evil genius of Brutus: we shall meet him again at Philippi.”

The mournful expression of Winter's eye, spoke compassion for his friend; he never seemed to think of himself. Fawkes fixed his stern gaze upon Tresham, as if he would dive into his heart; and once or twice his right hand fumbled with the hilt of his poignard.

“ I thank you, Mr. Tresham,” said Catesby, at last breaking silence, “ your offers are liberal. When I am inclined to take refuge in Flanders, as my purse is emptied of its last rose noble, I may perchance try what may be found in yours. For the present, however, my purpose varies not. I have enlisted with a few other generous spirits in the cause of God and his holy church—honoured as the minister of His sharp vengeance on impiety and tyranny. When I undertook this championship, I set aside all other regards. We have put our hands to the plough—we cannot look back.”

“ Yet listen to reason, Catesby,” Tresham again began.

“ My conscience has been satisfied, and that is enough; I leave reason to cowards and traitors.”

“ That will I be never,” said Tresham, “ you know me better, all of you; yet if I might be heard—if pity for yourselves, for your families, for your children, Robert Catesby—”

“ Poor little wretches.”

“ You have no children, Mr. Winter, it is vain to appeal to such affections in you.”

“I have a *friend*,” said Winter, stretching out his hand, and with a look of ineffable affection laying it on that of Catesby. A fervent grasp was exchanged between them; then their countenances settled again, and they sat as if prepared to hear with passive indifference; whatever more Tresham had to urge. But he had done: overcome with a variety of feelings, the cold, cautious, Tresham sank down upon a chair, and covering his face with his hands, abandoned himself to his emotions.

In a few moments, however, he conquered his agitation, and rising from his seat, left the room.

“There goes a traitor,” said Mr. Fawkes.

But neither Catesby nor Winter spoke.

Catesby was lost in his own thoughts. He saw before his mental eye this edifice of his pride, his passion, and his fanaticism, to which he clung with an obstinacy and pertinacity which increased with the difficulties which surrounded him, levelled to the dust, and all his slaughtered friends and associates scattered round it.

While Winter, in the destruction they both anticipated, seemed to see but one figure; and that was the hero of his imagination, the idol of his soul, the friend of his heart, all blackened and bleeding, expiring upon the ground.

Filled with such forebodings, they separated.

CHAPTER XVII.

“Yon light is not daylight, I know it, I:
It is some meteor that the sun exhales.”

Shakspeare.

THE 26th of October, 1605, was a calm and pleasant day, a separate sweet, sober, Autumn day, and the Lord Mounteagle summoned his page into his closet, where he had been writing since the morning, and told him that as it promised to be a fine evening, and might be the last which the season would allow him to enjoy, he would spend it at his country-house at Hoxton. “Where,” said he, “I have not been for a month; so order a man and horse to set off forthwith, and apprise my housekeeper there, that I shall expect to find a supper prepared for me at eight o’clock, and to taste of Dame Margery’s best syllabubs and junkets; for I am weary of much thought and much writing, and pant for the shade of my walnut trees, and a mouthful of fresh air. My secretary and ordinary gentlemen in waiting will attend upon me, but they need expect no other guests.”

The page made his obeisance and disappeared; and the earl, having carefully folded the papers on which he had been engaged, and placed them in his strong iron chest, which he locked, deposited the key in his pocket, rose from his seat, and going to the window, threw it up, and looked out.

His house commanded a view of the busy and opulent city; and the stirring sounds of commerce, the rolling of drays, the noise of the carters' whips, and their voices as they cheered their horses, and all the various hum of busy industry, rose to his ear. In spite of the contests of religious parties, and the wrongs and injuries by so many endured, it could not be denied that the country was in a flourishing condition. This Scotchman and his ministers after all, with their Spanish peace, and their abhorrence of war, its expenses and its dangers, had not done so ill. So this nobleman had long thought; and had abjured all his Spanish intrigues, and had given his adherence with unfeigned sincerity to an administration, which he was persuaded, upon the whole, was pursuing the best interests of the country.

The Lord Mounteagle understood the position of things, and the difficulties with respect to religion—difficulties which so greatly embarrass governments, and expose them to the censure of men at too wide a distance from affairs to calculate the perplexities, and the contradictory nature of the duties of those more closely engaged in them.

He had become considerate and temperate, while so many of his former friends and associates had become exasperated to desperation; and in spite of his very near relationship to the families of some deeply engaged, had been kept in total ignorance of what was in agitation.

So on the 26th of October he was calmly meditating upon the advantages of peace, the rewards of commerce,

and the benefit of good order and quiet submission to the existing government; as he rode through pleasant lanes, and between well enclosed and cultivated fields, and, accompanied by his secretary, Mr. Ward, and a few other of his gentlemen, at length reached his house at Hoxton. The house was handsomely built in what was quite the modern taste of that day; the halls were lofty and airy, and paved with many-coloured marbles; and the supper-room, where was a handsome repast served upon gilt plate, and already lighted by numerous wax candles, displayed the wealth and easy habits of the possessor. The gentlemen sat down, my lord at the head of the table, and began sociably to discuss the viands before them; the glass circulated, and the talk was cheerful and animated; they spoke of the ensuing meeting of Parliament, and of the measures to be agitated; and of their good hopes, by a well-concerted opposition and peaceable exposure of their grievances, to obtain by degrees from the government such concessions as were wanting.

They spoke as those speak of persecution and oppression which they have no apprehension will extend to themselves; and with that tranquil sense of the injuries of others, which visits men who have not had much reason to smart for their own. But still they *did* discuss the subject; and they did intend to use their best exertions in the cause; and they had good reason to hope not without success—that is, the great lord spoke of his own intentions, be it understood; for the gentlemen who attended upon him, though they

would have ranked as men of independence in our own days, were then but as small satellites that invariably followed in the track of the superior planet.

The gentleman called Mr. Ward, who was high in the Lord Mounteagle's confidence, did not mingle much in the conversation. Whilst that nobleman spoke of the extraordinary tranquillity maintained by the Catholics, and praised their patience and their prudence; accompanying his observations with the most sanguine anticipation of the good recompense which should finally attend upon such conduct, if they had the virtue to persevere; Mr. Ward kept his eyes fixed upon his plate, and continued his supper in profound silence, every now and then drinking large beakers of water, as if tormented by a grievous thirst.

He sat on his lord's left hand, who, however, seemed not to observe his behaviour.

There were a number of pages in waiting at this supper. My lord asked for a glass of sack; and on its being presented by a handsome young gentleman of about twelve years of age, who, being something new in the service, spilled a little wine upon the silver salver in the haste and hurry of presenting it,—he demanded where was Roland, who was in the habit of serving him with wine, and giving the little boy a fillip with a good-natured smile at his awkwardness, told him to go and fetch Roland, and tell him to pour out for him a cup of Malvoisie.

“For the sack is naught, after all,” he said; “and I wish what you have spilled, you young caitiff, were all that I have tasted.”

The boy went out, and on the instant Roland returned.

He had a letter in his hand.

“Where hast thou been, boy?” said my lord, with some little displeasure in his tone; “I do not use to want your services at supper—choose some other hour in the day for your amusements. You have twenty out of the twenty-four, I bethink me, to idle or sleep at your pleasure.”

“May it please your lordship,” said the boy, with much respect in his manner, but his face was flushed and his voice hurried; “one called me out from the supper-room to speak with a fellow who stood without at the postern-door. He said he had a message for your lordship, and would deliver it to none but the page who waited on your lordship’s own person.”

“Didst thou go? It was an idle foolery of some of the scullions, no doubt to get thee a whipping for thy officious pains.”

“So I thought, my lord, but I went nevertheless; I don’t know well why I went, but I did go. There was no one at the postern when I got there.”

“I could have told thee so,” said my lord, laughing good-humouredly.

“Phillip told me that certainly one had knocked at the postern, and when he answered it there stood a strange man there, who spoke in haste, but with a sort of solemnness which made Phillip believe that there was more than foolery in the matter. He bade him call one of your lordship’s pages, and tell him he would be waiting for him in the street.”

“ So you went into the street, and found as much as at the postern, I will warrant you,” said my lord.

“ No, my lord, I found the man; he stood outside the stable-yard gate; but it is pitch dark to-night—I could just see one huddled up in a dark cloak, standing in a corner of the wall, so that passers-by would have not discerned him. He said he had a message for your lordship, and asked how he was to come at the speech of you. I told him your lordship was at supper, and must not be disturbed, but that I would mention the matter, and doubted not in the morning, at a proper hour, you would be pleased to grant him an audience. The matter was pressing, he said, and would not brook delay, ‘ But this,’ said he, ‘ as if speaking to himself, ‘ may do as well; nay, it is the better way,’ and stretching his hand from under his cloak, he gave me this letter, charging me to deliver it into my lord’s own hands, ‘ as it contains matters,’ said he, ‘ of importance.’”

“ Poor devil!” said my lord, “ important enough to him, I’ll be bound—the usual petition. Some miserable caitiff recusant obliged to fly from inability to pay his fines, and craving assistance. Here, Ward, it seems written in a strange crabbed hand, and marvellously ill spelt, if one may guess by the superscription.

“ ‘ *To the right honourable the lord mowteagle.*’

“ Your eyes are better than mine: read it aloud. It seems written in a woman’s hand after all.”

Shall I give you the well-known letter in its original form and spelling?

“ ‘ My lord out of the love i beare to some of youer frends i have a caer of youer preservacion therefor i

would advyse yowe as yowe tender youer lyf to devyse some excuse to shift of youer attendance at this parleament for god and man hath concurred to punishe the wickedness of this tyme and thynke not slightlye of this advertisement but retyere youreself into youre countri wheare yowe maye expect the event in safti for though theare be no apparance of anni stir yet i saye they shall receyve a terrible blowe this parleament and yet they shall not seie who hurts them this councel is not to be contemned because it maye do yowe good and can do yowe no harm for the dangere is passed as soon as yowe have burnt the letter and i hope god will give yowe the grace to make good use of it to whose holy protection i commend you."

Mr. Ward's cheek was as pale as death ere he had finished, but not much paler than that of my lord and his company.

Lord Mouteagle took the letter from his secretary's hand.

"What is the meaning of this?" said he. He examined the hand-writing with the closest attention. "Is it—no, it cannot surely be—it cannot be Grace Vaux?"

"This is evidently a disguised hand," remarked Mr. Ward, now speaking with some difficulty, and evidently struggling hard to preserve an appearance of indifference. "Mrs. Vaux, had she any communication of importance to make to your lordship, being of kin to your kin, might surely have found some better manner of

conveying it. This is, after all, as your lordship's penetration at first conjectured, merely a trick to fool your lordship's pages: and look," said he, endeavouring to laugh, but it was a very hollow laugh, "the planner has succeeded; for not only the pages, but the whole company seem struck dumb, and look as white as corpses."

He was going to take the letter as if to tear it with contempt.

"But, hold, Mr. Ward," said Lord Mounteagle, "these are not times in which such warnings should be dismissed so easily. I think with you the hand-writing is not that of Mrs. Vaux, but be it hers or not I shall hold myself bound to lay this before the Privy Council immediately."

"You will not surely, my lord," said Ward, pressing his hand upon the paper, in his earnestness, as it lay upon the table before him. "Pardon me, my honoured lord, you would not surely disturb the minds of the government with such an unauthorised and unauthenticated paper as this! Consider how prone they are to suspicion on the lightest grounds. How much ill blood and ill disposition"

"Take your hand off the paper, so please you, Mr. Ward," said the nobleman, eyeing him sharply, "and mind your own business. When I run my neck into a case of misprision of treason it will be time enough to look upon me as incapable of managing my own affairs. Order my horses, Roland," turning to his page, "I return to London to-night."

Mr. Ward withdrew his hand from the paper, and

bowed in submission to his lordship's decision. Once he lifted up his eyes and endeavoured to meet those of his patron, but they were fixed upon him in such a scrutinising manner that his sank before them.

"I suppose Mr. Ward knew nothing of this letter?" said the nobleman, at last, in a tone of inquiry; while his eyes seemed as if they would pierce his inmost thoughts.

"How is it possible my lord should suspect me of such an impudent piece of presumption as to attempt to play upon his credulity? Moreover, his lordship may be pleased to call to mind that I was about to undo my own foolish plot—for it was I who counselled him to pay no regard to this ill-spelled, ill-penned, and ill-expressed attempt at a mystery."

"True—true," said Lord Mounteagle, taking his eyes from Mr. Ward, and once more scrutinising the letter, every sentence of which, obscure as it was, seemed big with meaning—real, serious meaning.

"This is no jester's letter," said he, to himself. "This is the writing of one deeply in earnest."

The horses were announced, and Lord Mounteagle carefully depositing the letter in his own pouch, mounted, and accompanied by his gentlemen, returned to town.

He rode straight to Whitehall to the lodging of Robert Cecil, now Lord Salisbury. A Council is summoned hastily in the dead of the night, and the mysterious and terrible paper laid before them.

They were all men of courage and sense, and possessed that contempt for idle mysteries and rumours of imaginary dangers which marks the man practised in

the affairs of the world; but there was something in this paper which seized upon the imagination of them all. It *commanded* attention. There they sat, with their strong countenances agitated by a sort of vague terror, their eyes rivetted upon the terrible morsel of paper—that small ill-written, ill-spelt morsel, which still exists, and upon whose brief words depended the fate of a nation, of a monarchy, of a religion, and the lives of thousands and thousands of innocent creatures.

The king was hunting at Royston.

Hesitating between the terror which the anonymous letter inspired, and that fear of the ridiculous which leads men to hold in so much dread the apprehension of having been led to give undue importance to anonymous threats of this nature, the Council at last came to the decision to await his majesty's return, lay the letter before him, and take his directions upon the subject: or, in other words, if rash confidence there were, or groundless apprehension, to throw the whole responsibility of it upon him.

The very next morning Thomas Winter was in possession of the fact that the letter had been delivered.

Mr. Ward called upon him and made the communication. It is not probable that Mr. Ward was in the secret of the plot; but he had, like many other Catholics, an impression that some stir, as it was called, was in agitation among the partisans of the cause; and he lost no time in conveying the intelligence of what had passed, to his acquaintance and friend.

Thomas repaired immediately to the small obscure lodging, still occupied by Catesby, at Lambeth—he was at home. Thomas knocked at the door of the small back parlour which he usually occupied, and was immediately admitted.

He found his friend standing by the window, looking out upon the country which lay before him. The day was perfectly still, but it was dark and cold, and heavy lowering clouds obscured the face of the heavens: the trees were bare of their leaves, the aspect of nature dreary and sad: but what was that, compared to the deep shadows of inexpressible melancholy which clouded the countenance of the wretched man.

His haggard and sallow cheek was overhung by brows which were shaggy, savage, and lowering; his eye burned within its socket like a fiery coal; his lips were nearly concealed by his rough unshaven beard; and his hair of amazing thickness, but all neglected, hung over his rich embroidered collar. His dress was handsome as it had ever been—but all faded and in disorder. Never was misery, never was remorse, never was despair, written in characters more dismal upon a human countenance: but it was the misery, the remorse, the despair, of the for ever lost.

There was not the slightest sign of occupation to be seen in the room; no pens or papers upon the table—no books or writings; he seemed so absorbed in his own miserable thoughts, as to have found all employment irksome and insupportable. He was standing with his face leaning against the panes of the window, when his friend knocked—he turned round and bade him enter.

Thomas Winter himself was much changed ; his cheek was pale and extenuated, and his pleasant blue eye had lost its lustre : but he, like the subject angels of the gloomy pit, suffered far less in spirit than did the unhappy leader. He had flung his conscience as it were, into the keeping of his friend, and to follow him, whatsoever the enterprise, had in it something of satisfaction. He was spared, by this submission of the understanding, all those agonies of remorse which agitated the desperate contriver of this dreadful plot.

“ Did you dream bad dreams, Robert, last night ? ” was Winter’s first address, as he looked upon his friend’s haggard face ; “ or have you already heard what I come here to tell you ? ”

“ I cannot very easily have bad dreams,” said Robert, “ for it is long since I have known what it was to sleep. The innocent sleep,” said he, with a sort of passionate melancholy of tone—“ Sleep, is for the innocent—or for the indifferent—which is it?—for to tell truth, Winter,” putting his hand to his brow, “ things get confused here ; and I scarcely know whether to detest myself as a monstrous criminal, or glorify myself as a martyr—whether to despise or to envy most those who are contented to sit still under their injuries. But your eye is more troubled than usual to-day : what news ? ”

“ The news will soon be abroad,” said Winter, endeavouring to recover his spirits, “ ‘ That God and man have conspired to punish the wickedness of these times ; and that they shall receive a terrible blow this parliament, and yet they shall not see who hurts them.’ ”

That is the intelligence now lying before his majesty's most honourable privy council; and perhaps it might be as well, Mr. Catesby, before amusing ourselves with the old chapter of the casuists which I thought had decided the question in our favour long ago—to consider what were best to be done to save our own heads; and whether we had not better try the air on the other side the water.”

During this speech Catesby had stood perfectly still, his eyes fixed upon Winter's face.

“ Explain yourself,” he said.

The narration was soon made.

“ I have thought so from the first,” said Catesby, after he had stood some time motionless and perfectly silent. “ Tresham has betrayed us. I have long thought, Thomas Winter,” taking his friend's hand and wringing it in his—“ that I was a doomed man: That not the deliverance of my church and party, but the destruction of all who have loved and trusted me, was to be my portion. The infatuation which led me to confide in Tresham seems fatal. But, so help me Heaven,” said he with a strange fervency, “ as I persevere to the last. This news will soon get abroad; and some cravens of our league, will in all probability desert us—but I have put my hand to the plough—and I will not look back. If all the horrors of my own thoughts have been without power to shake my resolution, neither shall the fear of what man can do. What say you, Thomas Winter—will you try the air of Flanders? Do so, and leave me to fire the mine with this hand.”

“The secret of this letter lies at present between us twain,” answered Winter—“and the thing is after all perhaps not lost. It is certain that the Lord Mount-eagle himself, was strangely puzzled with regard to the letter; and knew not whether to look upon it as a trick or as a warning. His majesty’s honourable privy council maybe will think themselves too great and wise to be moved by such stories. Come, man, let us take heart. I spoke of the air of Flanders—for, Catesby, there is that about you, which all men hold precious, and desire to save—but if you peril your life, much better may I mine. I shall follow your path, lead where it may—be ye sure of that—never call Thomas Winter friend else.”

Catesby answered this effusion with a pressure of the hand. He looked some time at his friend with a strange sort of melancholy tenderness and admiration.

“Well”—with some effort collecting his spirits, “you say well. This business may, after all, end here—and at present we had best keep the knowledge of it to ourselves, we may else discourage our friends. Our part is to lie perdue, and watch the course of events. But most of all it imports to confer with that miserable traitor, Tresham, and learn from him how far he has been privy to this letter, and how far he has betrayed us to the government. He is now down in Northamptonshire; in three days we may expect him in town; send him word to meet us at White Webbes, and let us search to the bottom of this secret. If my suspicions prove just,” said he with a terrible smile, and putting his hand

upon the hilt of his dagger—"the wood is very thick round White Webbes; and it is the fashion of the place to look to the keeping of secrets."

Winter nodded assent.

It was upon the 30th of October, that in that small room, so often described at White Webbes, these three met. They had sent to Tresham to meet them at this secluded house, on the pretence of discussing important business, and had agreed to regard his refusal to obey the summons as full confirmation of all their suspicions.

But Tresham came.

The room, as I have told you, was lighted only by windows at the top of the high walls. No one could look from within upon what passed without—no one from without could observe what passed within. The two friends sat upon the oaken benches by the side of the fire, for the weather was very cold and chilly. They had laid aside their swords as cumbersome, but each had his hand upon the hilt of the sharp, long, bright dagger which was stuck in the girdle.

The noise of a horse approaching was heard.

"He is come, however," said they.

The door opened, and he entered.

There was neither embarrassment nor hesitation in feature or gesture—neither hurry nor reluctance: he entered with his usual cold, reserved air, and coming up to the fire where the others were still sitting, for they did not even rise to receive him, asked what they would, and what was the news now.

Their eyes were fixed sternly upon him, watching every look and motion; but he appeared quite uncon-

earned, and drawing a chair, sat down between them, saying,

"What is the matter now? You look strangely upon me, both of you. Tell me, is there any thing new of moment happened, for I am but just returned?"

"Only," said Catesby, his dark, threatening eye fixing him, "that some villain has betrayed us; and Tom and I here are meditating upon the proper method of stopping his mouth."

And his hand significantly pulled at his dagger, and displayed a few lines of the shining blade.

"I wish you would explain yourself a little more clearly, Mr. Catesby, when you are speaking to me," said Tresham: "my genius does not lie in expounding dark speeches.—Cannot you or Mr. Winter here, tell me in one word what has happened; and in what fresh peril your life, and the lives of all of us who have trusted you, are placed?"

"The Lord Mountcagle was sitting at supper . . ." began Catesby, still sternly eyeing him.

But Tresham altered not a feature, he looked simply attentive.

"And his page delivered a letter—"

Still no variation of colour or expression.

"It warned him not to attend in his place in parliament, and it came from *you*."

And starting up, he grasped him by the collar with one hand, while, with the other, he drew from its sheath his glittering dagger, and flashed it before his eyes. Tresham raised his hand quietly, and put aside the blade:

“So help me all the holy ones of Heaven, as I am ignorant what you are speaking of,” said he, solemnly. “If you think, Robert Catesby, because I have pleaded, even to tears, to persuade you to abandon this matter and save your own lives, and the lives of so many brave men and innocent fellow-creatures as this business will put in jeopardy—if you think that therefore I would betray your secret and break my sacramental oath—you know me not. Here,” rising, for the hand of Catesby had relaxed as he spoke, and loosened from his collar, “here,” rising and sinking on one knee, “I solemnly invoke all the saints of Heaven as witness of my oath—I have not uttered word nor written line that could betray you; though I would lay down life to dissuade you from this perilous, and I doubt devilish enterprise.”

He rose from his knees.

“Poignard me, if you will,” he said, with his usual coldness, “but I warn you, if you do—that you will slay an innocent man.”

The dagger of Catesby fell into its sheath, the hand of Winter loosed the handle of his.

“Then who can it be?—”

“Nay,” said Tresham, “you know best who is in the secret of this business. For me, I think you might have supposed that to a kinsman like my Lord Mount-eagle, I, for one, need not, had I been so inclined, have risked myself by a dangerous letter—half-a-dozen syllables spoken in the ear would have sufficed.”

“True,” said Catesby and Winter at once—and they resumed their places. But vain was conjecture. The

determination to punish perfidy with which they had come to White Webbes, was rather diverted, than their suspicions altogether allayed : they still looked at Tresham suspiciously, and seemed to avoid conversing before him of any of their plans. He perceived this, and rose from his chair, saying, with some dignity,

“Is this all you had to say to me? If so, let me be gone. Not that I wish to depart, if you have still any doubt remaining which I can clear. I tell you both, you are mistaken in this matter, and I offer to purge myself by any oath you can devise—but before I go, let me repeat, for I am not afraid to repeat—that you are in a dreadful conjuncture, Robert Catesby; that this is an awful and a horrible business; and that neither God nor man, neither Catholic nor heretic, as you will too late find, but will curse the memory of the man whose evil brain conceived of it. Abandon it, Catesby. Go to Flanders; my purse is yours—live upon my purse. Do what you will with me—but for the love of all that is good on earth, or sacred in Heaven, have done with this dreadful matter.”

But his words fell as water upon marble, or rather as water upon fire, which it is powerless to extinguish, and only serves to feed. The opposition of Tresham, quite ineffectual to move, only hardened Robert in his dogged determination to persevere in his crime.

“Thank you, Tresham,” he said, “I will think of what you say; perhaps it may be as well—who knows?—Let us not, however, keep you here any longer: your purgation of yourself from this charge is a great satis-

faction, both to Mr. Winter and myself: as to your advice, we will think of it."

"Think of it! Ay, so we will," said Catesby, in a tone of exulting defiance, as Tresham left the room: "we'll think of it—we'll think of it when all these villanous thieves and tyrants are blown upward with their heels to the sky; and a Catholic parliament is abrogating all their accursed laws. Yes, we'll think of it then, Master Tresham—and till then, think you as little of us as may be. His purse, indeed! A dependant upon the purse of this pitiful miser, with heart no bigger than a sparrow's egg! Flanders! Ay, ay! the descendant of Richard Catesby starving in Flanders! No—no—no—honest Tom—we'll play them a match yet, shall make all Europe tremble at the rebound. This government is too wise to be frightened at shadows it seems. The letter to my Lord Mountcagle is at the back of the fire by this time: and Master Tresham will take care, I think, how he indites another. I am my own man again, Winter, at last. Come, Tom, let us up and be doing—Six more days! Come—come"—

And his cheek coloured, his whole frame dilated, his eye spoke exultation and assurance; it seemed as if every doubt and apprehension had vanished—such were the alternations of his excited mind.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Papé Satàn! Papé Satàn! Aleppo!”

Dante.

It is Allhallows-day, the 1st of November, 1606; and parliament is to meet upon the 5th.

Coughton, near Alcester, in Worcestershire, the seat of the Throckmortons, is a long, long way from London, and what is done there on the 1st, will never be visited by punishment—for the whole frame of government will be destroyed upon the 5th.

And Father Darcy and Father Tesmond, already exulting in the success of their long-concerted plans, are celebrating openly the magnificent rites of that religion which is soon to establish her unquestioned sway over this benighted land. No longer concealed in secret apartments, no longer hidden in vaults and cellars—the large hall at Coughton is decorated before the open face of day for the imposing ceremony.

The high altar is erected at one end; over it hangs a magnificent picture of the annunciation; the tabernacle for the host below is of richly sculptured gold, and blazing with jewels; the altar is decorated with its spotless drapery—and covered with rich vases of silver and silver gilt filled with artificial flowers of extraordinary beauty; the immense candlesticks support a multitude

of blazing wax candles; the steps of the altar are covered with rich carpets—and Father Darcy, in a splendid dress of crimson embroidered with gold, assisted by three other priests, Tesmond, Gerard, and Hall, and by a number of young boys in their white dresses of lawn and rich crimson sashes, waving censers, which scatter incense from their hands—is celebrating high mass in all its ancient splendour.

I said in broad day—for in broad day were all these preparations made; but it is now a dark November evening, and the shadows fall heavy round the house without, while the blaze of light within is only the more resplendent for the contrast.

Do you hear the grand burst of voices that swells under the lofty roof of that magnificent hall? The deep roll of the organ—the voice of exulting triumph, with which the whole assembled multitude unite to utter the sacred hymn—

“Gentem auferte perfidam
Credientium de finibus;
Ut Christi laudas debitas
Persolvamus alacriter.”

It rings through the vaulted roof, that loud song of victory; it sounds through the long galleries and passages of that ancient mansion—it echoes trembling in many a devoted heart.

There is Grace Vaux kneeling not far from the altar, her eyes in an ecstasy of thankfulness lifted up to Heaven, her face no longer pale, emaciated and spiritless, but bright, and illuminated with exceeding joy.

There kneels Evelyn, her eyes bent to the earth in

deep and devout thankfulness. And Eleanor, in a sort of passionate rapture, is kneeling too; but her thoughts are still on earth, still hover round the man, the leader as she doubts not, of this sacred band which is to emancipate them all.

For they were now made aware that some great enterprise for which their prayers were requested, was afoot, which was to result in the final triumph of their Holy Church. But they were still kept in profound ignorance as to the exact plan with all its frightful details. And Father Darcy, as daring and insolent in success as he had been reserved and timid in danger, now summoned them all to unite in that holy service which should insure the co-operation of Heaven, and the prayers of the hierarchy of saints, for the success of the glorious undertaking.

And there he stands at the front of the altar, in his magnificent robes of purple and gold, supported by the priests in dresses almost equally rich and gorgeous; he dares to lift an eye unabashed to the great heavens; he dares to elevate the Host, the awful sacrifice of the Redeemer of all mankind, the Lord of love, and Prince of peace; and his heart—black with deceit and treachery—to consummate the awful sacrifice of the mass, while the assembly are humbly and devoutly kneeling around. The marble floor is covered with their sweeping garments; all eyes are bent to earth, all heads are bowed in deep and grateful reverence: and then he gives out another psalm. Again their choral voices swell to the gilded roof; and this is the psalm he bade them sing.

(*Psalm lxxix. Deus Venerunt Gentes.*)

“Oh God! the heathen are come into thine inheritance, thy holy temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem a heap of stones.

“The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat to the fowls of the air, and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the field.

“Their blood have they shed like water, and there was no man to bury them.

“We are become an open shame to our enemies, a very scorn and derision unto them that are round about us.

“Lord, how long wilt thou be angry: shall thy jealousy burn like fire for ever?

“Pour out thine indignation upon the heathen that have not known thee: and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.

“Oh! let the vengeance of thy servants' blood that is shed, be openly showed upon the heathen in our sight.

“And for the blasphemy wherewith our neighbours have blasphemed thee, reward thou them, oh Lord! sevenfold into their bosom.

“So we, that are thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, shall give thee thanks for ever: and will always be showing forth thy praise from generation to generation.”

Everard is present, he is kneeling, his little son is kneeling by his side, he has a hand in his, and the innocent eyes of the child are lifted to his face, filled with a sort of marvelling admiration, at this unwonted splendour. Tears—the tears of enthusiasm stand in his

eyes, and his countenance is lighted up with a sort of wild expression of passionate self immolation; he feels the little soft trembling innocent hand in his; he hears the loud bursts of music; and his heart swells to the great sacrifice he is about to make in the cause of that holy ancient church, now once more revealed in all her splendour before his eyes—The church no longer suffering—the church no longer militant—the church triumphant! The new Jerusalem as a bride coming down from Heaven! And even these little innocents, whose soft hands are grappling at his father's heart—even they, yea, they—yea, all he loves, if so it must be, shall be offered up for such a cause.

For an offering he feels it to be. He knows not why, but rejoicing, as he does, in a victory for his church, he has never once anticipated his own.

From the first moment of his accession to the conspiracy, he felt himself a devoted being—the melancholy foreboding was invincible. Was it destined that his heart, that heart so good and generous, should even, while plunging into this abyss of crime, remain unstained—that not one sentiment of interested ambition, hope of personal reputation, or purpose of private revenge, should mar the purity of the hapless victim?

This disinterestedness it was which so fatally blinded him to the enormity of the crime he was about to commit: and when in his last agonies, as the executioner pronounced “this is the heart of a traitor,” and the dying man rallying his fleeting spirits exclaimed, “Thou liest,”—this was the recollection which supported him.

And now the ceremony is ended, the tables are

spread out in this assembled company, filled with exulting faces, are feasting and toasting the success of the great undaunted enterprise.

Father Darcy sits at the head of the table by the Lady Fitzmaurice: he is no longer in his secular habit: he chooses to wear his Jesuit's dress as do the other priests—and with so bland, so gentle, so engaging as he on that eventful evening. Could you believe that mild benevolent blue eye—that persuasive smile—that modest and lowly, nay, almost too humble manner—covers a heart exulting in the possession of the direct secret and working in the anticipation of gratified ambition and revenge? Every now and then he starts and turns and looks round him: in fancy he hears a loud explosion, and the wailing shrieks and cries of thousands. Then, in truth, his cheek does turn pale, and a slight shudder passes over him: he looks round with a suspicious, cautious glance: but no one has heard the phantom sound except himself, and he resumes his supper, and pours out glass after glass of sparkling wine. The table is surrounded by gentlemen and ladies of family and consequence, and the talk is of the cheerful future. But of the means which were to secure that prosperous future not one, but the two Jesuits and Everard, had the most distant suspicion. It is but justice to them to repeat this, and their subsequent conduct supports the conclusion, that had they suspected the nature of the plot it would have been rejected with horror.

But a stir! as the phrase was—open rebellion, their arms in their hands—was what most among them would have regarded only as an honourable resistance to op-

pression; for so they had been taught; and this was what they expected—and the exultation which beamed from every feature of the man in whose sagacity they all placed implicit reliance, was received as an earnest of coming success.

Grace Vaux was certainly no partaker in the feast.

Her feelings little inclined her to such celebrations. She is kneeling before a crucifix in a small secluded oratory, pouring out her fervent heart in prayers for the success of the great enterprise; her heart glowing with rapture at the thought of those by whom the great undertaking was conducted; as she already, in her excited fancy, beheld them adorned with crowns more glorious than earth could bestow; and with palms in their hands receiving from the redeemed multitudes that worship which was offered to the heavenly saints.

Neither were Everard or Evelyn to be seen at that supper; they were walking together under certain cloistered arches on one side of the mansion, which commanded a view of the surrounding country; their little children were with them.

The cloisters were now deserted, and except the fountain splashing into the basin in the centre, all was still. But the wind might be heard in sullen blasts, which portended approaching storms and rain, raving amid the tall woods; and the shrill scream of the vane at the top of the stables as it whirled in the wind, seemed to give a wild lamenting sound.

This is Friday, it is a day of evil omen; on Sunday they are to part. Everard has assembled a large hunting party to hunt on the dreary wilds of Dunsmoor;

they are to meet at Dunchurch; and he is to take leave of her and to ride to Goddenhurst upon the Sunday morn. He has told her this evening that so it must be, and he has not concealed, now so much is known, that this is but a pretence to assemble all his friends, and that on the Tuesday, November the 5th, they are to declare themselves openly.

He has been giving his wife directions what trunks are to be forwarded after him; and she has already made an inventory of the coats of armour, of the rich suits and of the jewels which her steward is to deliver from Goddenhurst to Dunchurch, or to Ashby de la Zouche, or to Mr. Talbot's at Grafton, or to the Lord Winton's as the case may be.

She has done all this with an air of cheerful alacrity, and even of her anxious feelings: for to support his spirit in every circumstance is the principal object of her being. She sees the cause of melancholy that hangs over his brow, and she encourages him to hope the best, and to leave all in a cause as good as good and as true.

And what she thus knew . . .

She thought like the rest of a family open opposition to tyranny and injustice: that involved her of back and body, and mental consideration scarce entire.

It would strike Sally as Evelyn cheered. Sally is

"I think the trunk of armour which was sent to Mr. Jackson's is the only one the other trunk with me which had in it circles of mail. My father is that the Andrew Knight of Newport shall have never so good some goods as shall be necessary to bring the support of my wife and children."—*Letters of Sir E. Darcy, from the Tower.*

smiled upon her as upon one by anticipation already a victim ; he saw as with a spirit of prophecy those sweet eyes all darkened with horror, and tears in rivers rolling down pale extenuated cheeks, now so sweetly rounded with health. Sadly and tenderly he smiled upon the kind comforter, and sadly and mournfully he from time to time glanced at his little children.

On Sunday evening the parting was.

The great hunting match on Dunsmoor, was to begin on the Monday morning. Evelyn stood at her window and watched the train as they disappeared behind the rising ground.

Everard was at the head ; he rode gallantly forward on a fine spirited horse, but he paused, and turned, and looked back, and again and again waved his hand in farewell. Even at that distance she fancied she could discern the fond tender expression of his countenance. Her heart yet thrilled with the memory of his last affectionate embrace—her two little children stood at her knee watching with her.

“ Father is gone,—quite gone ”—said the eldest, as he disappeared. Evelyn sighed, and shut the window. She turned with her usual patient fortitude away.

She never saw him more.

“ We have doffed our black robes, Evelyn, and are come out all glorious in scarlet and gold,” was the remark of Fabian, as he met her on the evening of All

Saints' day. "And we have all been thanking Heaven, and making sure, as every one does, that Heaven is engaged on our side. But for my part I could wish to see people less secure of that matter; for Heaven, as I have heard say, loves not deeds of violence; and the new robes of those holy men have marvellously to me the aspect of those of that terrible being in the book of the prophets, whose garments had been rolled in blood."

Nothing had ever been able to allay the suspicions which the jester cherished of Father Darcy, nor his rooted dislike to him. But he had long learned to know that such dislike must be confined to his own bosom. He had long learned to sigh over the influence the Provincial had obtained even over the clear-sighted Evelyn. The sagacity of Fabian had made him well aware how hopeless is the war which simple good sense has to wage against enthusiasm and prejudice; and that the part of the poor despised fool never could be made good against that of the subtle and accomplished Jesuit. In spite of all his tolerated impertinencies, the poor fellow was at heart but a coward; he loved his mistress too dearly to venture to offend her; and the cloud of displeasure which had lately darkened over Evelyn's face when he indulged himself in a jester's insinuations against Father Darcy, had taught him to sigh and to forbear. At times, however, his old habits prevailed, and unwelcome truths passed his lips; but there was little encouragement to persevere.

CHAPTER XIX.

“ Ora incomincian le dolente note
A fàrsi sentire: or son venuto
Là dove molto pianto mi percuote.”

Dante.

EVERARD is riding with his train from Coughton to Goddeshurst, this dark lowering evening of Sunday the 3rd of November; and in Lincoln's Inn Walks, which are at present deserted, two gentlemen are walking together; one with the gestures of almost a frantic man, is conjuring and imploring the other to save himself and his friends by a speedy flight.

The clouds overhead are black and threatening, and seem to threaten a great fall of rain, and the wind makes a low moaning sound among the branches of the elms overhead, which tells of a coming tempest. The darkness of the evening seems to lend its influence in increasing the agonies of Tresham's despair.

But Thomas Winter is obstinate.

“ Will nothing move you?” Tresham reiterates. “ Is it in vain for me to repeat that I know the whole plot is betrayed to the privy council—that search will sooner or later be made—that we shall all be seized—that the rack will wring the secret from one or other . . . that poor creature Bates, for instance; and that a death, at which the bravest heart shrinks, with the ruin, root and branch, of our homes and families, will be the inevitable conse-

quence. Winter—Winter, by the soul of your mother—by the ashes of your father—by all you love on earth or hold sacred in Heaven—make an end of this detested business.”

Winter is immoveable.

“ Robert Catesby is resolved, and I will never forsake my friend,” is all the answer that can be got out of him.

Thomas Winter possesses the obstinacy of gentle and pliable characters when once they have come to a fixed resolution.

That night the conspirators met at Lambeth, and Winter reported to them what had passed.

It was evident to them all that Tresham had means of information not possessed by the rest; that he was in communication with Lord Mounteagle—it might be with the government—but nothing could shake them. The thought of abandoning an enterprise carried on so long—contemplated till their consciences had lost all sense of its enormity in the anticipation of the tremendous extent of its consequences—was insupportable. They were infatuated. Percy was the most determined of all: he declared that be the consequence what it might, he would abide the trial; and Catesby, though he had from the first delivery of the letter gloomily anticipated the result, persisted in his resolution to stand by the enterprise to the last.

They flattered themselves with the idea that Tresham might have exaggerated the danger in order to induce them to abandon a scheme which it was evident he heartily disliked. The government still remained perfectly inactive. Mr. Fawkes, who with his usual intre-

pidity had visited the cellar every day, found that all was still undisturbed—and now eight-and-forty hours only need elapse, and they should arrive at that goal at which they had aimed for eighteen months, with such singular pertinacity and with such successful secrecy.

To abandon their purpose now, was not to be thought of. There they all stood assembled—perplexed, yet resolved—alive to all the perils that surrounded them, but determined and undismayed.

Alas! that so much courage—that so much self-devotion—that so much generous disregard of personal considerations, should all have been perverted to so dreadful an object. The generous zeal, the fine moral force, all directed to evil and to crime: the crime only the more enormous, the evil only the more overwhelming, from the strength of those generous, but fatally misdirected principles, from which it had taken rise.

Alas! when the light that is within men is darkness, how great is that darkness!

“Oh Ballard! Ballard! what hast thou done,—a sort of brave youths otherwise endowed with good gifts, hast thou by thy persuasions brought to this utter destruction and confusion.”

There stands the tall figure of Piercy, his high military countenance, determined and desperate. There stands Catesby, gloomy as that grave which he sees yawning before him—obstinately resolved. There stands Thomas Winter, his hand is upon the shoulder of his friend—on him he rests—he follows, he cares not whither, so Catesby lead the way. There stand the two Wrights, their

coarse countenances lighted up with a sort of fierce, savage defiance. And there stands Fawkes, that strong, iron-hearted soldier, prepared with the indifference of an old veteran of the cruel Spanish wars, to dare and to suffer all. John Grant, of Norbrook is also present, his countenance lighted up with the gloomy fire of desperate fanaticism. Keyes also, looking like a gambler, who throws his last stake, double or quits. And poor simple Bates, his head uncovered, his mouth open, and his eyes staring, gapes and wonders, and does not half understand them all.*

After much consultation, the part of each is allotted and accepted. It was resolved that on the following afternoon Catesby and John Wright should leave London, and join Sir Everard Digby, at Dunchurch; that Piercy and Thomas Winter should lie concealed in town a few hours longer, to watch the course of events; and that Fawkes, his matches in his pocket, and his dark lantern in his hand, should repair to the cellar, and there remain till the fatal moment should arrive.

Dangerous as was the part assigned to him, Fawkes accepted it, or rather persisted in it, without the slightest hesitation. It had been the part he had originally undertaken, on account of his knowledge of military mining operations; and the perils which surrounded them at the present moment, did not seem to shake his resolution in the slightest degree. He went to his appointed place with the intrepidity of a veteran, commanded to take his station upon some mine, which it is known, will in

* See the curious old print in the British Museum.

all probability, immediately upon his occupation of it, explode.

Fearfully were those last hours spent by them all. The horror of the deed, now the consummation so nearly approached, bathed with cold sweat their faces, and the hair of their heads stood on end.—This horror being mingled with the appalling suspicion that the whole scheme was already discovered, and would, even at the very last moment be defeated. Then the awful alternative in which they stood! between the slaughter of countless numbers of mingled innocent and guilty creatures, now sleeping in peaceful security, to be awakened as at the blast of the last trumpet, and hurried into eternity—or the utter destruction of themselves, their friends, their houses, their families, while their very names should become a curse and a by-word among men! Such were the pictures which the excitable imagination of Catesby painted in dreadful vividness before his eyes, as, wandering up and down the now darkened streets of the lumbering city—for which of them could taste repose upon that fearful night?—he abandoned himself to all the agonies of his despair.

It would not have been yet too late: for, such was his exceeding influence over the minds of his friends, that what the prospect of danger, death, torture, and infamy, was powerless to effect, one word from his lips would have brought to pass. But that temper, naturally obstinate, reckless, determined, and desperate, had only been rendered doubly obstinate, reckless, determined, and desperate, under the influences to which he had been exposed. And though voices, as of

angels, calling from above—and threatenings, as of demons, clamouring from below—seemed sounding in his ears as he hurried from place to place during that frenzied night—calling upon him to repent—to retract—while yet there was time—nothing moved him.

The morning broke upon that faded countenance—faded like one changed to a deathlike paleness by the agonies of the rack—but that eye of invincible energy burned with unextinguishable fire.

It might be a little past midnight, on the memorable 5th of November, 1605, when Sir Thomas Knyvet, as is well known, accompanied by a sufficient number of assistants, arrived at the vault where the gunpowder was deposited. Fawkes was just stepping out from the door, dressed and booted as if for a journey, and was immediately arrested.

An old contemporary print represents him in his tall Spanish hat, and long Spanish cloak, seized by two or three men—his dark lantern is in his hand—and the piercing eye of Providence, from one corner of the picture, pours a beam of concentrated light upon the wretched man.

In the afternoon of the preceding day, the conspirators had been informed by Fawkes that the cellar had been visited, but that the barrels of gunpowder had escaped observation. Upon this, Catesby and John Wright had mounted their horses and had galloped out of town, in the hopes of joining Sir

Everard Digby, and in any event raising the country in open rebellion.

Piercy and Kit Wright, as soon as the arrest of Fawkes had taken place, followed at full speed; Rookwood and Thomas Winter remained a few hours longer in London, to watch what would next take place.

Early in the morning they were in the streets to collect intelligence. They found the town almost distracted with amazement and horror. People were running up and down with looks terrified—hair dishevelled, and eyes wild with dismay—interrogating each other, and without waiting for an answer, hurrying away in opposite directions. Some stood stock still, as if petrified with amazement—others gathered in knots in the corners of the streets—whispering with suppressed voices—and starting as the wintry wind rushed howling down the streets, interrupted by sudden deluges of rain, which separated the whisperers, only to re-assemble again as the storm abated. The shops were empty—the sound of commerce had ceased in the streets—not a cart or dray was to be heard—a terrific pause seemed to pervade human existence, and the hum of life to be silent in the busy town. A pause—as if men still anticipated in breathless terror, the blast of that horrible tempest which was to have destroyed such numbers.

Winter, with extraordinary coolness walked about the streets. It was then early; and the sun had not yet risen. He made his way in the dim twilight of a November dawn, towards the Parliament-house: but in the middle of King-street, Westminster, he found a

guard standing, and permission to pass was refused: as he parleyed with the guard, a man passed by and said—"There is a treason discovered, and the king and lords should have been blown up." He stopped to hear no more, but taking his horse rode out of town, towards Worcestershire.

He did not attempt to follow the others. He seems to have been for the moment confounded, and without settling any plan with himself, made for his brother, Robert Winter's house, at Huddington.

Rookwood and Keyes had deserted their houses, and also ridden out of town. Rookwood, who was a man of large fortune, and had relays upon the road, followed the track of Catesby and Piercy, and overtook them as they mounted the ascent at Brickhill.

They had ridden, and were riding, as if pursued by the fiend; the desperate vehemence of the wild-goose chase once described by Evelyn, was as nothing to the headlong haste, with which, regardless of every other consideration, they urged their horses forward at the very top of their speed, over the deep and miry roads. The rain was now falling in torrents—the heavens, as if in a second deluge, seemed descending in sheets of water to wash out the memory of this execrable crime.

They dashed on—their large cloaks all heavy with rain, and bespattered with mud and mire, impeded the headlong fury of their course—they stopped, flung them away, and hid them behind the hedges—and then forward—forward—

Alas, to what a goal!—But the furies of remorse, despair, and passion pursued them; and though no

hope, but that of a last and a desperate struggle wherein to sell their lives as dearly as possible, was before them—they hurried onward with resistless speed. They seemed to fly—but “black death sat behind the horseman.”

It was about six o'clock in the evening, of the Tuesday, the 5th of November, that with faces all darkened by despair, they reached the town end of Ashby St. Legers—in other words, the entrance of the village, which stood at some little distance from Catesby's home.

To meet his mother—that cruel, irritating mother—was impossible; to visit his home, had it been a happy home, under his present feelings, might have been still more intolerable; with the hideous despair which had gathered round his heart, now visible in his blighted countenance, Catesby dismounted from his horse, and sent to call out Robert Winter.

Robert Winter was then at Ashby, unconscious of what had taken place; and employed in a vain attempt to reconcile the mother with her son.

He came out to the end of the village, and upon the small bank beyond the stream, found the jaded and exhausted company, all drenched with rain and covered with mire, sitting upon their wearied horses—whose heads hanging down, and battered and panting sides, gave evidence of the fierce desperation with which they had been urged forward.

“What news?” said Robert Winter, astonished at their appearance.

“All is lost,” was Catesby's brief reply. “Fawkes is in the Tower—we left London last night.”

“Will you not come in and take some rest and refreshment?”

“No, so help me God, in this my utmost need, as I never enter under my own roof more. I am a vagabond upon the earth, like Cain the first murderer—Here is his mark already upon my brow.”

Winter looked up involuntarily.

There was *that*—that indescribable expression, not to be mistaken. The hand of the Almighty had written it in characters ineffaceable—it was as he said—the brand of the first murderer was there.

The other gentlemen, a little grouped together, sat upon their drooping horses, watching their leader. They were passive, as utter hopelessness renders men; they seemed to sit there, only waiting to know what form of death he was about to choose for them.

Catesby stooped down, scooped in his hand some of the water from the brawling brook which runs through the village of Ashby, and hastily drank repeated draughts of it—then he dashed the water over his heated face.

The others dismounted and did the same.

He seemed in some degree refreshed by this, and rousing himself, and endeavouring to shake off the gloomy desperation which was fast seizing upon his spirits, he proposed, that, wearied as were their jaded steeds, they should remount immediately, and join the assembled party at Dunchurch.

Attended by Robert Winter, they accordingly set forward; and plodding drearily through the deep and miry lanes—their almost dying horses floundering and

stumbling at every step—reached the inn about ten o'clock on that same night.

The little hostelry was filled to overflowing with a richly accoutred and gallant company.

Early in the evening, Sir Everard Digby, followed by a large party of gentlemen, had ridden in from hunting; and fresh gentlemen, followed by servants and retainers, were hourly arriving from every side.

Though still ignorant of the precise nature of the enterprise in hand, the whole company was flushed with hope and expectation. The hostelry stood upon the edge of Dunchurch green, with two or three tall elms in front of it, among which the sign of the never to be forgotten dun-cow was swinging and creaking in the November wind; before the door, numerous gentlemen's servants, pages, and retainers were lounging, laughing, swearing, and exchanging practical jokes, all in the highest spirits at the idea of a stir; and under all that excitement which common minds experience in the expectation of new events—be the anticipated disturbances of what nature they will. The court-yard and stables behind were crowded with horses of every description, and resounded with the voices of huntsmen, valets, and grooms; while within, the low raftered ceilings were gleaming with reflected light from the huge blazing fires, and innumerable lamps and candles—every room being filled with company. Many of the gentlemen wore their hunting suits, others were splendidly dressed, as for some great occasion; the tables were

covered with the best viands which mine host could collect; and the wine was sparkling in the glasses, as they were raised to the lips, in answer to one toast after another; each couched in mysterious terms, and each conveying the same hidden meaning.

In the largest apartment, at the head of a long oaken table, surrounded by the guests of greatest distinction, among which were Sir Robert Digby and the two Littletons, Everard was sitting. His face was unusually excited, the red colour came and went; now his brow was flushed, and his eye sparkled with a strange unwonted excitement; now he listened at a pause in the conversation, and turned pale with excessive anxiety and expectation; but nothing was heard save the wind roaring round the house in sudden gusts, and the splash at intervals of the torrents of rain, followed by the shouts and laughter of the men without, as they ran for shelter under the ample porch, or crowded together beneath the elm trees. A loud burst of the tempest was heard, and the two Littletons, who were in the secret, exchanged looks with Everard. They shuddered, turned pale, and listened, as if all ear—to their excited imaginations it seemed as if at that moment the explosion had taken place.

“Come, Everard,” said his uncle, Sir Robert, “thou’rt strangely absent to-night—pass the bottle and give us another toast.”

But the untasted glass of Everard was still in his hand and rested upon the table. He heard not a word that was said. Sir Robert turned to Humphrey Littleton, “The young gentleman is strangely disordered

to-night. Come, Mr. Littleton, let us have a toast from you."

"Three brimstone matches and a farthing rushlight," was the reply.

Littleton was a sort of a humorist, and as an instance of his oddity, the toast, without further reflection, was accepted and drunk with loud laughter.

Still, in spite of the high spirits they were in, as the evening advanced, and the time approached when it would be possible for one riding post haste to have arrived from London with the intelligence of what had been done on the morning of the 5th,—they, who had all been taught to expect that day as the one upon which the rising in the metropolis was to take place, began to hold their breath, listen, and look anxiously from time to time, at each other.

"What a cursed din those rascals without keep up," said Stephen Littleton, impatiently. "It is impossible to hear, though a company of horse were galloping in at the town end."

"Listen," said Everard, authoritatively.

A sort of broken gallop, as of horses forced forward, yet faltering and stumbling at every step, was now heard. An instantaneous silence in the crowd without, succeeded; and while the company round the table sat in mute expectation, the door opened—and, bespattered with mire; their hats and feathers drooping over their faces; drenched with rain which streamed from their cloaks and collars; their countenances pale, jaded, and sunken, and a sort of wild desperation and hurry in

their eyes and gestures: Catesby, Percy, Rockwood, Arthur, and Robert Winter entered the room.

St. Everard started from his seat, uttered a cry of dismay as his eyes fell upon Catesby, and sank back again into his chair.

The rest of the company, with looks aghast, remained as if motionless in their seats, their eyes rivetted upon the miserable party.

Catesby, unmoved, even in this last extremity, met the looking, inquiring, dissatisfied looks that surrounded him, with his usual air of dauntless defiance; and walking straight up to the table, and laying his hand upon it with a clear, steady voice, he said:

—“The great gentleman, the enterprise in London has been discovered and defeated. The government is informed: the news will be abroad in twelve hours more—and unless we find means to provide for our safety, we are all lost men.”

A murmur of general dissatisfaction spread throughout the assembly, increased by the voices of all the gentlemen assembled at supper in the other rooms, who came crowding in great agitation and excitement into the apartment.

Thundering looks were fixed upon the speaker, as the company, rising in a sort of angry impatience from their seats, crowded round him, with eyes that demanded explanation, and brows that lowered with displeasure. All had seen but Everard; he had fallen back in his chair, and had covered his face with his hands.

“It is too true,” repeated Catesby, haughtily looking

round, and confronting with an air of proud indifference, the looks of displeasure that met him on every side; "the enterprise upon which I and twelve honourable gentlemen had staked their lives, has been blown.—One of our company is already in the hands of this detested government—but he is bold, faithful, and true, and we need fear no treachery from him. The rack and the scaffold may be his portion, but I question whether in his solitary dungeon in the Tower, he shows so pale, or so fallen a countenance, as any of those I see around me here. We have done what we could, nor is it our fault if there has been a traitor in the camp. It remains only to learn whether any of this present company are bold enough to draw their swords in support of a good cause not yet entirely lost; or whether the twelve brave men who ascended the breach, shall be abandoned by their companions, and left there to die."

The countenances around him softened somewhat at this speech, and the gentlemen returning to their seats, asked in a low voice, and as if questioning among each other, what was next to be done.

At length Sir Robert Digby, a man of more age and authority than the rest, elevating his voice above the others, said:

"Before we proceed further in this business, we would at least be glad to be enlightened as to that of which we have till now been kept ignorant.—What was the precise nature of the undertaking in which we were summoned here by our friends to assist?—What was that plot, which, if we are to judge by the appearance of Mr. Catesby and his companions, has been so

the chambers of that parliament condemned to this hideous destruction; and every heart sickened with unutterable horror at the idea of so merciless and indiscriminating a slaughter.

Catesby, his brow darkening, his eye beaming with desperate and hopeless defiance, kept his ground; and stood there as a mark for the execration written on every countenance, and muttered by many a tongue. The gentlemen behind him, his fellows in this dreadful crime, with eyes aghast and staring, seemed thunder-struck with astonishment at this unexpected reception of their design.

But Everard lifted up his face, glanced hastily round at the assembled company, then sunk his head upon his arms on the table, and uttered one low, deep groan.

Then old Sir Robert Digby, that man of unquestioned honour and integrity, rose from his seat, and standing up, said in a loud and distinct voice:

“Gentlemen, and Catholics, members of an honourable and noble church—we have neither art or part in this devilish enterprise. Those, who instead of drawing the generous sword, and perilling life in open battle for the honour of God, have been skulking in corners, and mining in dark cellars—content to scatter destruction alike on enemies and friends, and to escape by flight from the consequences of that explosion, which they themselves have prepared—may seek supporters elsewhere than from among us. . . . Farewell, Everard, I could have wished to have left the descendant of your honoured grandfather in a nobler and better company. Escape as you best may, the punishment you have called

upon your head from the vengeance of God and the outraged justice of mankind: but look not for aid or assistance from me. Come, gentlemen, the night is far spent—it were better we should all ride home.”

And with an air of lofty contempt and indignation he left the room, followed by the most part of the company. There was a general calling to horse, a general hurrying and shouting among grooms and pages—the galloping of horses was heard, as troop after troop departed.

Then those wretched men lifted up their eyes which had remained fixed upon the ground, during Sir Robert's speech, and looked round the apartment—and there they stood abandoned and almost alone.

Catesby, stern and gloomy, his eyes fixed upon the table before him, had listened, without moving a feature to Sir Robert's address. Even after he had left the room he still remained standing where he was, lost as it would seem in depth of thought.

Everard, his face buried upon his arms, neither spoke nor moved—and hardly seemed to breathe—till one went up to him and touched his elbow. He lifted up his wan and woe-begone countenance, and looked. It was his brother, it was John Digby.

Everard did not speak, but his eye seemed to say—

“You!—and have you not deserted me?”

“Everard,” said John Digby; his voice was low, and trembled with horror and emotion, but his eye spoke the deepest and tenderest compassion: “Brother, let us both fall down upon our knees and thank the Almighty, that in his infinite mercy he has spared you from the

commission of this execrable crime." Then melting into pity at the sight of his brother's fallen and bewildered countenance, he added, "Those cursed priests have betrayed my admirable brother. But be comforted—be comforted, Everard. There may be a life to pay in expiation, but that you will cheerfully offer.—Let us fall down and thank the Almighty that your hands are yet pure of innocent blood."

"There is not *one* among them that does not look upon it with abhorrence," said Everard, gazing ruefully first upon one hand and then upon another, as if the crimson stains of guilt were on them; then shaking his head mournfully, he said, "and I could believe it was the part of a martyr! . . . Was it my uncle I heard speaking?" he continued, endeavouring as it would seem to recover his recollection. "And is he gone with his company?—And why are you not gone too, then?"

"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," said John Digby, throwing his arms round his brother, and bursting into a torrent of tears; "for thou mayest die the death—but never hadst thou the heart of a traitor."

During this short scene the eyes of Catesby had been fixed upon the two brothers; and at one time a sort of dim cloud, as if of water had passed over that fiery eye. There was a slight swell in his chest—the *hysterica passio* of poor Lear rose and choaked in his throat; then he turned round to the few gentlemen who had not yet deserted him, and said with astonishing composure and steadiness—

"Before we entered upon this business, we had the

are yet men, and have yet our religion and our friends to defend—let us, at least, make a stand. There are some hopes that a rising may be expected in Wales. By a brave resistance on our part, there is a chance, before we perish, of obtaining better terms for our friends and families. Let us in this extremity do all we can. Something may be purchased for our religion by the sacrifice of our hearts' blood. Let us in these, our last hours, do our best for that cause for which we have lost all."

At this speech the few gentlemen remaining in the room approached the table—while Everard lifted up his hand and sat earnestly attentive, and even John Digby listened.

Catesby then proposed that they should mount immediately, and pursuing their way through Warwickshire and Worcestershire, raising the country as they went along, should endeavour to reach the confines of Wales, and, if possible, make some stand, so as to obtain before that final surrender, which he seemed to regard as inevitable, some composition for their friends and families, and some relaxation of the penal statutes in force against the unhappy recusants.

To such suggestions all listened with avidity—and as they discoursed of the means for carrying the plan into execution, their brows cleared, and a faint wintry kind of hope cheered, in some degree, their sinking hearts. The first difficulty they had to contend with was the want of horses; for their own, on which they had ridden from London, were almost incapable of leaving the stable. Catesby, who was long beyond

he agreed in minor scruples, immediately proposed to take such days as they could find at the inn, ride to Vauxhall and then breaking open the stables of a certain inn, a breeder of great horses, there supply themselves with what was wanting.

To this Robert Winter objected, saying that this expedient would make a great uproar in the country, and would raise every hand against them when once known, — adding, “that they should not further incur the wrath of their generous king by so doing.”

Cassidy was not a coward, and then said—

“None of us has the ink black.”

“But,” said Robert Winter, “others, I hope, may, and perhaps I may be this time.”

“What has your wife done?” said Cassidy, with some degree of anxious solicitude in his tone and look. “I assure you, there is none who has known of this affair but your friend.”

“We have no such confidence in all their hearts as we do in yours in this matter,” the country squire answered, “and besides, as I have a doubt, it may be an expedient to watch them narrowly.”

It is likely you are among them.

Robert Winter is in the same line with you and what he has suggested in his secret mind, that is, he is going to do it. His wife, however, is much with the ladies and

citude for others, mingled with the most generous contempt for his own sufferings and danger.

John Digby had pressed to accompany Everard in this last struggle; he could not endure the idea of forsaking the man he loved in this his extremity.

But Everard would listen to no such suggestion.

“Thou hast kept thyself altogether clear from this matter,” said he, “and God forbid that I should suffer thee to run into peril for my poor sake. Thou hast heard the doom of all pronounced, but thou hast not deserved, and so help me Heaven shalt not share it. On my head let the punishment fall—Would to God that others innocent as thyself might be spared their heavy part, but this may not be. Ride to Coughton, dear John, with all speed; see my wife, and break this heavy news to her. Tell her she shall hear of me ere morning. Comfort her and support her, and kiss my little ones for their poor father.”

All this was said with the sort of melancholy, patient despondency of one who considered himself altogether undone, but yielded to his fate with the submission of a heart that acknowledged the righteous equity of the infliction.

And so the brothers parted.

Miserable, depressed in spirit, terrors from without and a troubled conscience within, their hearts trembling with a rising distrust of the righteousness of that cause to which they had offered all, the wretched fugitives, a

weather and diminished company, pursued their way through a cold dark November night. The howling winds rushed through the branches over their heads as they traversed the warty lanes of Warwickshire, tossing their heads some on high, as if in defiance of their sufferings—the dark night cast her shadows around them, and the rain from time to time fell in heavy showers while the pale wan moon waded between the clouds, cast a spectral light upon this desolate and miserable party, now reduced to less than a hundred, and from which at every mile they made, some one or other who had joined them, found means to escape.

They traversed the night like spectral spectres, deserted of food and warmed by the temperature of man.

At last they arrived in the heart of midnight. All had been ventured in two hours in sleep: and the way to home was dark and silent.

In some of the remembrances of Robert Winton, here passing and some of his companions broke into a smile as they looked back upon their halcyon days in the past. How they had laughed and laughed forward to the house of John Green not far distant.

A crowd was at that time a rare and scarce sight. The house was a hall of unity and considerable cheer. A ray of light is all the remains of it now.

How they played in youth and consideration in the house of John Green was in the house of John Green—nothing that had returned had in the last night's sleep in view of the future of

his cause; and his steady adherence to his own ideas upon the matter, in some degree served to cheer and strengthen the fainting hearts of the rest.

There was a large table in the centre of the vast hall, already covered by the care of Mr. Grant with arms and armour; and here each gentleman provided himself with such provision as he thought necessary; for hitherto they had worn their riding dresses, and were furnished only with their riding rods.

Everard, who was well mounted, had not stopped at Warwick; he had ridden forward to Norbrook. They found him engaged in writing when they came in.

Catesby went up to him. He did not speak, but he took the hand of Everard, and pressed it. Everard lifted up his head, but what a face was there: a face already darkened with the hue of death—a countenance from which all hope, all doubt had vanished. The expression of one awakened to the full enormity of the crime in which he had assisted, and prepared in patience to endure its just consequences.

The hope held out by Catesby that something might be gained for the unhappy Catholics, and some mercy for the less guilty of their party by thus persisting in resistance, had made him look upon it in the light of an expiation to persevere to the last. Under this impression, the deep conviction of wrong to which his heart had been awakened, had taken no form of outward demonstration; it was a settled despair, under the influence of which he was calm, gentle, patient, and considerate of others to the last.

Not a feeling of resentment, not the shadow of a reproach towards that mistaken man for whose love he had sacrificed so much, and whose fatal influence had urged him forward in this dreadful career, was in his countenance, or in his heart. His pity for the wretched Catesby and his unhappy companions, had obliterated every harsher feeling.

The gentle, the compassionate, the affectionate expression with which he looked up as his hand answered the pressure of his friend, struck to that strong man's heart. And tears of remorse and passion—such as the great betrayer shed at beholding those, “for his fault answered”—blinded the eyes and ran down the rough cheek of Catesby as he turned away.

Everard followed him for a few minutes with his eye, and then with one deep sigh, a sigh such as tells that the heart of the man is broken, resumed his employment.

He was writing to his wife. His letter overflowing with sorrow and affection, was filled with every motive for consolation which he could invent to support one so tenderly loved, by him thus involved in this miserable catastrophe.

His own feelings are best expressed in his own simple and touching words, as preserved in his letters still in existence.

“Now for my intention; let me tell you that if I had thought there had been the least sin in the plot, I would not have been of it for all the world—and no other cause drew me to hazard my fortune and my life but zeal to God's religion. . . . For my keeping it secret, it was caused

by belief that those which were best able to judge the lawfulness of it, had been acquainted with it, and given way to it. More reasons I had to persuade me to this belief, than I dare utter, which I will never to the suspicion of any, though I should to the rack for it. But now let me tell you what a grief it hath been to hear *that* so much condemned which I did believe would be otherwise thought of by many Catholics. Death would now be a welcome friend to me, and is most desired now I have heard how Catholics think of this matter; and that it should be a great sin that should be the *cause* of my end. It calls my conscience in doubt of my very best actions and intentions in question. I know that I myself may have easily been deceived in such a business, and I protest unto you that the doubts I have of my own good state, which only proceeds from the censure of others, causes in me more bitterness of grief than all the miseries that I ever suffered. I can do nothing now, but with tears ask pardon of God for all my errors, both in actions and intentions in this business, and humbly beseech that my death may satisfy for my offence, which I should and shall offer most gladly to the Giver of life."

The fortitude of Everard had again given way as he penned this paper, and tears gushing from his eyes streamed over the words, as he asked pardon of his tender wife and little loving children, and implored their forgiveness and their prayers.

But he was not long left to the indulgence of these tender feelings. The little band of unhappy friends

They stood in silence, in broken words and distracted
thoughts, considering as to their next
proceedings.

Seeing that Edward was about to despatch his
retainers in quest of him, it was proposed to substitute
John as being more trustworthy than the rest; and
that a letter should be written to Father Darcy to
advise him as to what course it were best to
pursue.

In the course of half an hour they again took horse,
and pursued their desperate way towards Haddington.
The following day saw the miserable crew as they
passed from place to place, stopping at the various houses of
the nobles and attempting to rouse the Catholic
population to join them. Everywhere
they were met with the same expressions of unmi-
serable woe and indignation. The gentry drove
them from their doors with bitter reproaches, for the
treason which they had induced upon the Catholic
cause. The people stood gazing and staring at the
deserters, and regarded them as, with clothes torn and
soiled with the wind and rain, battered hats, broken
swords, and pale faces, stricken as it were with the
plague. However they hurried through the towns
and villages. Not a single man joined them; and their
numbers were rapidly diminished to nearly half its numbers.
At length, their inferior retainers starting away
in great numbers, all the gentlemen were them-
selves obliged to march in front and rear, with levelled
swords to arrest the flight of the deserters.

Fatigued and disheartened, they reached the house

of Robert Winter, at Huddington, about the middle of Wednesday. At this place they were joined by Thomas Winter, who had arrived from London before them.

Speechless with emotion, this affectionate man flung himself into the arms of Catesby, as he alighted from his jaded horse. The two friends embraced in silence—the tenderness of affection, even in this dark passage of life, mingling a something yet to be called sweetness with the bitterness of the hour.

The whole company now entered the house, where refreshments were provided for them. Weary and faint they were; but it was other and living waters for which their souls were panting.

In the dread struggle with awakening conscience in which their souls were agonising, their hearts called aloud for that support which the Father of truth and light alone can give. And such means as their religion afforded for reconciling the misguided soul to its Creator, they earnestly sought with many tears.

There was a priest at that time at Huddington—to him they humbly, one after another, confessed their sins upon their knees: the ceremony of the mass was afterwards celebrated.

What consolations this man, professing to minister the truth of God to his fellow-creatures, dared to offer in this harrowing moment is left to conjecture. Did he dare still to apply the false and blasphemous unction of his casuistry to assuage the loud cries of a lacerated conscience; or did he, wise and good, raise up boldly the hideous phantom of their crime before them, and

teach them, misguided but not yet utterly perverted, to fly to the Fountain of all mercy for relief?

Alas, alas ! still blinded ! Blind guides and blinded victims ! “ We were absolved and received the sacrament.”*

The remainder of the wretched history is all one scene of dark, mysterious, hurried confusion ; as, passing from house to house, they rushed through Worcestershire and Warwickshire, pursued by the hue and cry which was now raised, and by the Sheriff of Worcestershire and all his men.

They had sent an embassy on Wednesday to old Mr. Talbot, of Grafton, a man of the highest consideration among their party, and father-in-law to Robert Winter: in his support lay their last hope: but the old gentleman drove them from his door with indignation, and refused to let one of them even enter his house.

This was the last decisive blow. After that they abandoned altogether the hope of offering any thing in the nature of effectual resistance, and seemed to fly forward, impelled by that sort of blind instinct which leads men to hurry from impending death—and with a vague sort of intention to make a stand at some place or other, and sell their lives as dearly as they could.

On Thursday morning we hear of them at Whewell Grange, the seat of the Lord Windsor, about two miles from Broomsgrove, where they seized, by force,

* Robert Winter's confession.

upon a large store of arms, armour, and above all, upon a bag containing a considerable quantity of gun-powder; and wading rather than riding through the now almost streaming ways—the rain pouring in torrents over head—the waters out on every side, each little stream or torrent become a river or lake—swimming the fords—plashing and struggling through mire and water—broken in body and disturbed in mind;—the small company which yet remained together, consisting of Catesby, the two Winters, Thomas Piercy, John and Christopher Wright, Rookwood, Grant, and a few others, took refuge in the house of Stephen Littleton, at Holbeach, two miles from Stourbridge, in the parish of King's Swinford, in Staffordshire. Everard, at the entreaty of Catesby, had already left them, to endeavour to obtain succours, it is said—but all is confusion as to views and motives now. Certain it is, that Digby was overtaken near Dudley, by the hue and cry; surrendered himself without offering the shadow of resistance; and was immediately conveyed to London and lodged in the Tower.

Where to his amazed, bewildered, and miserable reflections, his penitent tears and earnest endeavours to arrest the fatal consequences of his crimes from the heads of others, we leave him.

JESUS MARIA.*

“ Who’s that which knocks?—Oh stay, my Lord, I come,
 I know that call, since first it made me know
 Myself; which makes me now with joy to run,
 Lest he be gone that can my duty show.

Jesus, my Lord, I know thee by the cross,
 Thou offerd’st me, but not unto my loss.

* Verses of Sir Everard Digby, written in the Tower.—*Historical.*

“ Come in, my Lord, whose presence most I crave,
And show thy will unto my longing mind :
From punishment of sin thy servant save,
Though he hath been to thy deserts unkind.
Jesu forgive and strengthen to my mind,
That rooted virtues thou in me may find.

“ For private loss to grieve, when others have no cause
Of sorrow, is unmeet for worthy mind;
For who but knows, that each man's sinful life still draws,
Most just revenge than he on earth can find.
But to undo desert and innocence,
Is to my mind, grief's chiefest pestilence,” &c.

CHAPTER XX.

“Come grief, possess that place thy harbingers have seen,
And think most fit to entertain thyself;
Bring with thee all thy troops, and sorrow’s longest teem
Of followers that wait for worldly pelf.
Here shall they see of wights most lamentable,
Than all that Troop, that seem most miserable.”

Sir Everard Digby’s verses, written in the Tower.

*Væ victis!**

It was the motto of his house, so often applied in their hour of conquest, to their foes. And often and often, in the exultation of anticipated victory, murmured by Robert Catesby, when he thought of the enemies of his Church.

Væ victis!

It rang in his ear like a funeral knell, as, after a night of indescribable horror, the haggard remnants of that baffled band of conspirators met in the great room at Holbeach.

Still, be it to their honour spoken, miserable and blasted criminals as they were, visited of the judgment of God, and abhorred and execrated by man, one sentiment yet remained—one endearing sentiment sheds a faint, pale, and tender light, amid the horrors of this darkness.

Whatever their feelings, whatever their crimes, one punishment they escaped—theirs was no hell of reproaching and upbraiding demons. Deep as was the

* See his arms over the porch at Ashby St. Legers.

self-accusation which began obscurely to dawn on each individual mind, we hear of no recriminations against each other. Every one seems to have borne his own portion of the burden with unrepining constancy, and only to have been earnest to lighten it to his friends.

Let me not be mistaken.

To dwell upon these softening features in the characters of these men, and in the detail of this abominable crime, is not to be considered immoral.

Truth is never immoral, and this is truth.

But I have failed altogether in the task I had proposed to myself, and which I begin to feel too cruel, if I have not made you go along with me in the sentiment that these men were *not* the victims of selfish passions, nor baser self-interests, but that they were the dreadful sacrifice to mistaken principles.

Poisoned at its source, that which should have been as living waters to nourish their souls, had been perverted to forward and cherish the growth of every hideous passion. Once more the fiend had entered the garden of the world, and offered the fruit of the tree of knowledge, to mislead and to ruin.

One more frightful instance—let it never be forgotten or effaced from the memory of man—had been added to the heart-rending, the despairing list, of the highest motives perverted to the most devilish purposes—of faith, self-devotion, zeal in religion, reason, intellect, knowledge—all directed by that power which is from the great Satan—the dark, mysterious source of evil—to ruin the soul of man.

And shall I dare—may I dare to hope, that in this

last feature of generous undying love, which was maintained among them to the end, we may with reverence venture to think we discern the dawnings of that mercy, which would not suffer these wretched and misguided ones to be finally lost.

An immense open chimney-piece—a large blazing fire of wood and Staffordshire coal—a room wide and straggling, rising to the roof of the house, but bare of furniture and desolate—

Half-a-dozen pale and haggard men, with dishevelled hair, cheeks worn and furrowed with fatigue and misery, and clothes all disordered and covered with soil and dirt.

The hue and cry will soon be here; the news of the sheriff's approach has already reached them. They will sell their lives as dearly as they can.

Thomas Winter has early gone out to *discover* as he termed it. The rest are, as I have said, round the fire assembled. In traversing the ford of the Stour, now swollen by the incessant rains, they have wetted the bag of powder which was taken from the Lord Windsor's, and they are now employed in endeavouring to dry it, and render it again serviceable. They have two or three pounds for immediate use, lying before the fire; the bag containing the rest is at no great distance.

Catesby is standing over it, Mr. Grant and Mr. Rookwood close behind him.

A coal falls—a small coal—small as the match and lantern light of Guy Fawkes.

A loud blast as of the thunder-bolt.

The powder explodes in their faces, bursts the mat, and the heavy bag of powder, with the force of the whirlwind, is hurled through the ceiling to the sky.

Catesby, stunned and blackened as by the lightning flash, falls as one dead, backwards upon the floor.

The others do not fall, but their features are all broken, swollen, and distorted by the gunpowder, and they look like the living spectral representation of that dream of Robert Winter's, on Monday night—when he saw houses all toppling and falling, and his friends crowding before his eyes, with faces all swollen and discoloured. They stare for one moment aghast at one another. But that loud blast, had like the trumpet's at the crack of dawn, at length fully aroused their sleeping consciences—they started, and stood as men wide awake.

Each, as if standing before the judgment-seat of God though late, acknowledges the voice of that accusing angel, who waits upon the soul of man. He starts suddenly as it were to life, and flashes the TRUTH before their eyes.

God is against them.—

The first who rushed forward, was the elder Wright, who piteously exclaiming “Woe, worth the time that we have seen this day!” clasped the body of Catesby in his arms, and raised it from the ground.—He thought he was dead.

But he was not dead, he was only stunned.

They only thought of restoring *him*—they never heeded themselves.

He came to his recollection: but it was to confess the

conviction of a conscience awakened by this last appalling event—this righteous judgment, which had given them some taste as it were, of the horrible death they had prepared for so many others.

Not all the casuistry of their teachers—not all their absolutions—not all their masses—nor their holy sacrament itself, shall avail them now.

The stubborn heart of Catesby yielded to the conviction, and he made confession aloud, “that he now perceived that the hand of Almighty God was against them in this enterprise.”*

All thoughts of further resistance were henceforward abandoned.

Kneeling bare-headed before a picture of the virgin which was in the hall, these men abandoned of their priests, and of all the vain resources of their superstition, humbled their souls before God. They dared to approach him, their father, without the vain mediation of a tonsured minister with heart no purer than their own;—they dared to draw near to the great Reality—and with torrents of repentant tears, to plead for pardon of their heavy crimes.

“Perceiving God to be against them, they all prayed before a picture of our Lady; and confessed that the act was so bloody as they desired God to forgive them.”†

Thomas Winter was wandering about in the woods near the house at Holbeach, endeavouring vainly to

* Historical

† Bookwood's Examination. State Paper Office.

obtain some intelligence of the sheriff's movements, when a loud report struck his ear, and in the instant after, his own man, pale with terror, his hair streaming in the wind, came rushing like one distracted with terror through the wood.

Breathless with haste and affright, it was some time before he could find words to tell, that the powder had exploded, that Mr. Catesby was killed, Mr. Grant and Mr. Rookwood terribly wounded, and that Mr. Littleton's counsel led to him to fly and escape for his life, as he himself was about to do.

"I will first see the body of my friend, and bury him, whatever may befall me," was Thomas Winter's reply.*

On entering the house, he found, however, Mr. Catesby alive, and though with a frame shaken and his face all blackened and distorted with the powder, recovered from the shock.

He had left them all eagerness to defend themselves, and resolved to sell their lives as dearly as they could.

He found them humbled and self-condemned, only anxious to shed no more blood.

"I asked them," says Winter, in his confession, "what they resolved to do?"

They answered,

"We mean here to die."

I said again,

"I would take such part as they did."

It was about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, when the sheriff of Worcestershire, Sir Richard Walsh, followed by several gentlemen, constables, and such power and force of the county as he could collect, arrived at, and beset the house.

A summons to surrender being made, and no answer returned, the house was set on fire on one side, and an assault made upon the court, which, as usual in houses of that description, was defended by a wall and a sort of gallery, and had a door in the centre; the wall it appears was low, and the pistols were easily fired over it.

Though intending to make no defence, it seems that the last determination to which the unhappy men had arrived, was that of not being taken alive. They seem all to have come down into the court and exposed themselves intentionally without defence to the fire of the assailants.

The first shot struck Thomas Winter in the shoulder, and deprived him of the use of his arm.

By the next, the elder Wright fell dead, by the third, the younger.

Then Catesby said to Winter, "Stand by me, Tom, and we will die together," and placed himself in front of the door by which they were to enter.

"Sir," said Winter, "I have lost the use of my right arm, and I fear that will cause me to be taken."

Then Piercy and Catesby placed themselves back to back, and one bullet struck the life of the two friends at the same moment. They fell—and the crowd rushing

in shortly after, Winter was thrown down, repeatedly wounded with a pike, and taken alive.

Catesby and Piercy were killed together.

And now the dim shadows of death gather round Robert Catesby's fiery eye. And that countenance of wonderful power, force, and intellect, is darkening with black shadows and the cold sweat of the grave.

Ages seem concentrated in the last moments of those who linger so. Before them, ere yet the final curtain drops, depicted with supernatural truth and force, the scenes of life pass in succession before the glazing eye.

He sees them.

His innocent infancy—his wild unsteady youth—his first crime.—He sees, as some strange demon haunting every scene, the fine countenance and gentle insinuating blue eye of him who had beguiled him to his ruin.

And he sees *her*—a memory never effaced—though so frequently obscured in the hurry and agony of his turbulent existence. She rises before his eye, in all the calm and holy loveliness of that long-remembered night of magnificence and pleasure. And then suddenly, as in a strange confusion of expiring thought, she mingles with his devout aspirations after the blessed mother of our Lord; and as if impelled by a new impulse of life—he moves—he half rises—he struggles forward upon his hands and knees.*

The life-drops falling from his bosom stain the steps, as he gasps and falters on. He reaches that large,

* Historical.

low, and now silent and deserted hall—where serene in beauty, with the holy infant in her arms, stands a blessed image of the Virgin.

He struggles towards it—catches it in his arms and strains it to his bosom . . .

And now the life is ebbing fast—and all these brief and vivid memories mingle and confuse together as in one incoherent dream.

A choaking—a gasp—a slight shivering convulsion—

And the soul of Robert Catesby is gone to judgment.

Thomas Piercy died of his wounds the next day.

The rest were reserved for trial—their confessions serving to carry down the record and explain the hidden meaning of this dreadful tragedy.

May generations yet unborn profit by the lesson—

May those who read history—LEARN.—

CHAPTER XXI.

Quell' è il più basso luogo e'l più oscuro,
E'l più lontano dal ciel che tutto gira.

Dante.

WHILE despair and death are busy with the miserable victims of his devilish policy—you must return with me to Coughton, and to Father Darcy.

We left him in all the exultation of anticipated victory, already in imagination setting his foot upon the neck of kings; and in the triumph of his religion and party, gratifying all the selfish greediness and restless pride and ambition of his heart.

His order, and he the Provincial of his order!....

Already have the vast ramifications spread over all Europe; over all that is known of this living world. The small slender fibres from that mighty root have insinuated themselves into every crevice and corner of this vast edifice of England's body politic, and now, like the mighty pine-tree which tears up the ground, and hurls rocks from its foundation as it falls—with one heave the powerful engine shall bow its mighty force before the wind, and heave the solid fabric from its foundations.

Some such image as this was in Mr. Darcy's mind, as on this dark, rainy, stormy November morning, the wind roaring and howling without, the rain beating with violence against the windows—a huge wood fire blazing upon the ample hearth, and glittering upon the splendid

hangings, ornaments, and ceilings of the large hall at Coughton—he paced up and down its floor with Father Tesmond, otherwise Greenway, by his side.

The business was by this time done.

Yet, neither priest had yet ventured to hint a syllable upon the subject to their assembled friends.

They had not entirely lost the feelings of men.

Not all their false principles—not all the force which habitual pretence and hypocrisy possess to harden the human heart—not all the pride, ambition, and indifference to wrong which marked their characters—not even the gross indulgences of the table which disgraced Father Darcy's habits—could altogether so completely annihilate every natural feeling, but that some compunctions, some shrinkings of the flesh, would make themselves felt; as the blasts of wind, roaring at intervals round the mansion were heard with noise resembling that of a sudden explosion, shaking every door and window with violence as they rushed by. There was—it was impossible but so it must be with any heart of human flesh—there would be a shudder, as the loud blast died away in a sort of wild lamentation.

Father Darcy had been in high spirits as he rose replete from a plenteous breakfast this morning. His heart had revelled in the pride of victory as he entered this hall with a fire in his eye and dignity in his carriage proper to one already a prime leader and mover amid the affairs of men. But as he and Father Greenway paced silently together, both expecting the eventful news—this mournful, wrathful, stormy violence and melancholy wailing of nature, fell with darker and darker influence upon their hearts. It seemed to them

as if the dirge of human kind was singing by these winds, and tears over the desperate ruin raining from the skies.

Yesterday it was done—to-day what are they about in Westminster—in shattered, ruined, slaughtered Westminster? Where is the lordly palace? Where the grand and stately abbey? Where those halls tapestried with the trophies of English victory, and filled with the grandest, the fairest, the noblest, and the wisest? Heels to the sky—to use the rough words of John Wright—they have been scattered by the rage of the fiery tempest, and Westminster is a city of the dead.

There is again a wild sudden rush against the windows: it seems as if the demons are clawing and clattering for entrance: then the wind shrieks and moans once more, and with the wail, as of terrified women and perishing infants, sweeps dismally by.

Father Darcy was any thing but a brave man. His check paled and his folded hands shook together as he turned and looked at his companion. But Father Greenway preserved the same determined face as ever. He was a man of more resolution, and had still less of the human weakness of pity than his companion.

“No one comes—it is strange,” at last Father Greenway said. “There must surely have been time for one riding post haste to have arrived from London.”

“They have not surely forgotten *us*,” expressed the fears of Father Darcy.

He had no fear for the success of the undertaking; but he had a lurking doubt how far the fiery Catesby, when flushed with victory, might be found manageable.

This anxiety, as yet an indistinct work of feeling, began to take shape and form.

Greenway had left the hall, and the Provincial remained alone. A small oaken door communicating with the servants' apartments opened, and a serving-man coming up with a something mysterious and troubled in his air, said, "One was just arrived would fain speak with Father Darcy."

"Admit him at once," was the Father's order; and Bates, in a state of the greatest disorder, his thick red hair all dishevelled and wetted falling about his face, his great blue eyes starting with terror and fatigue from his head, his cheek all patched with colours, pale and red at once, his knees knocking and hands trembling, was admitted, holding a letter in his hand.

"What news?" but the appearance of Bates at once told what news.

Father Darcy unfolded the letter, and was engaged in reading it, while the poor trembling Bates stood anxiously by, when Father Greenway returned.

"The messenger is arrived. What is it then, Bates? What news? How fares it, man?"

"Listen and you shall hear how it fares," and with astonishing composure, Father Darcy read the letter from beginning to end aloud, as Bates in his confession reported.

"Enough," he said, as he quietly folded it up, "the enterprise is discovered, and we are all undone."

A lamentation upon the injury this unfortunate failure would do to their *Order* followed; not one word from Father Darcy as to the miserable victims.

How to provide for his own safety, was the next

question. Would he be suspected? cautious as he had been, would not some link of connexion with this "unfortunate business," as he styled it, be detected? What could Digby and Catesby be dreaming of, thus to send a messenger direct to him—to consult him, forsooth,—what business had they to consult him?

"Hark ye, fellow," he said, going up to Bates: and addressing him rudely and sternly, he commanded him, under the heaviest penalties, both as regarded the here and the hereafter, to abstain from mentioning to living being, that he had been dispatched upon this errand by his master: adding, brutally enough, "they will very probably catch thee, fellow. Dost thou know that they will rack thee to within an inch of thy life if they do?—So take care of thyself, but above all things mind my words—If they *do* catch thee, let not the torture wring from thee one jot to the suspicion or injury of God's priests—or that torment, that gehenna, which thy cowardly soul findeth too sharp for the endurance of an hour, will be thy portion by the judgment of the Most High, for all eternity."

The poor fellow trembling, with tears in his eyes, and in a supplicating voice and manner, entreated for mercy, promising, in broken accents, that he would die on the rack before he would betray such holy men.

"Then mind," said Darcy, "thou hast never seen me, save amid general company at Harroden or Rush-ton. Thou didst *never*, on thy soul, convey letter or message to me. Dost thou heed me—mentally reserve *save upon that one night*? And now carry thyself back with what speed thou mayest, lest any of the servants of this house should question thee."

"But my master," urged the poor, misguided ignorant; "he is in great straits, he beseeches counsel at your hands, reverend father. You have always been used to counsel him. Forsake us not in our extremity."

"Fool, what art thou talking of?" said Darcy, angrily, "I counsel!—I! 'Oh, my soul, enter not into their counsels, nor take part in their assembly.'—Carry back this message to thy master, if message there must be: tell him I absolutely abhor and disown both him and his, and all his devilish devices. Bid him remember who it was that preached peace and forbearance till his listeners were offended and weary. Bid him remember who it was that refused to listen to his diabolical plots, or enter into his treasonable conspiracies. Dost thou hear, idiot?" as poor Bates stood gazing at him with speechless amazement. "Dost thou mark me, as I utterly disown and deny," and here he attested his assertion with the most dreadful oaths, "any knowledge or participation in this foul and damned enterprise. Dost thou hear?" shaking him roughly by the shoulder as if to rouse his attention to his words, "dost thou mark me?—Let that truth be got out of thee when thou art racked."

And refusing to listen to one word more upon the subject, with a stern, authoritative gesture to Greenway, who well understood it to impose an absolute command to say and do nothing to discredit this assertion, Father Darcy left the room.

Poor Bates, now stammering and bursting into tears, fell upon his knees, and with his hands clasped, and the large drops rolling down his cheeks, besought Father Greenway not to forsake them utterly.

Poor fellow, he had been brought up in such superstitious reverence for his priests, that to be deserted by them in this distracting hour of distress and danger, appeared to him as the climax of calamity; he prayed with agony and urgency that Father Tesmond would join the dismayed and distracted party, and assist them with his counsels.

“For you know yourself, reverend father, how in that house at the court of St. Clements, I did in the sacrament of confession avow what my master had engaged me in. I did ask of you counsel in a matter which touched my conscience, and thou didst advise me that the thing was lawful and praiseworthy, and that I was to be secret and faithful.”

The bridge was thus broken down behind Father Greenway, for the fact was undeniable.

But Jesuit though he was, he was a brave, energetic, enthusiastic man, and of a nature not inclined to forsake his friends in distress, nor to abandon an enterprise at the first check. Had he not been a Jesuit—had he not been educated in that habit of unquestioning obedience to the authority of his superiors which had become as it were a second nature with him, he might have felt the same contempt and indignation for the meanness and cowardice of his Provincial, which we do. As it was, he passed over that part of the subject; and as Bates reiterated his prayers, saying: “If ever he loved or wished to serve his master, to come to him now,”

Greenway said: “That he would not forbear to go unto him, though he were to die a thousand deaths. Though I see,” said he, “that this business will overthrow the whole society of the Jesuits.”

He then left him for a short time to ask permission of his superior.

They were about an hour engaged in close conference. Father Darcy would by no means listen to the generous urgency of Greenway, to be allowed openly to join the unhappy confederates. All he could obtain was permission to meet them at Huddington that night, and there concert measures with them.

“ But the whole matter is undone,” Father Darcy repeated, “ the enterprise is lost—all that remains for us, is to keep our own heads out of the noose—to separate ourselves entirely from their interests, and look after our own; which, I can tell you, Mr. Tesmond, will need all our care. Nevertheless I do not say, *if* a general rising in the northern and western counties and in Wales were possible—I do not say—I am not prepared exactly to say—what then—I must leave it to your best discretion, to act as circumstances may require in this business. Commanding you as you value your salvation, and upon your oath of obedience, not to suffer my name to be once mentioned in this matter. No, not by the most distant implication—you know—you must remember,” said he with stern emphasis, “ that it was under the seal of confession—under the seal of confession *alone*, that this communication was ever made to me, and that greatly against my will. That which is revealed to me in confession, *I* do not know—it is as if it had not been—I wash my hands altogether of this foul business. I have ever preached peace and submission—I am a man of peace—I have ever been a man of peace. Do you not acknowledge

it?" Father Greenway reverently bowed. "As such, I altogether disown these rash and desperate conspirators—I wash my hands of all this blood"—so Pilate washed his hands. "Do you understand me?—do you take me with you, sir?"

All this was spoken with the hurried emphasis of one anxious to impose what he knew to be a lie, upon the credulity of another.

Again Father Greenway made a low and submissive reverence. He could not but remember—his memory would be busy—but he repressed such unfortunate recollections as impious, as contrary to his vow of obedience, and bending his head with an air of meekness and compunction, that strangely contrasted with his strong, fiery, and almost fierce countenance, said:

"These are your commands—I will obey them strictly, as I am in all things bound to do—rely upon my discretion and fidelity."

And taking horse with Bates, he joined the conspirators on Wednesday night at Huddington.

He allowed himself but half-an-hour's conversation with Catesby, and again departed. This fidelity to his sinking friends, enormous as his criminality had been, is one redeeming point at least in *his* character.

The bold man, it may be a slight satisfaction to remember, escaped to Flanders.—The mean, truckling, paltry dissembler, ascended the scaffold.

Bates had been better mounted than John Digby—his horse was fresh from the stables at Warwick—

that of John Digby, weary with a day's hunting. The latter arrived at Coughton shortly after him.

Do you hear the lamentings of women?—Do you see their agonies of grief and despair?—Do you hear them calling upon God in this their distraction, and imploring for themselves and for those they love, his long suffering mercy?

Their priests do not so. “During all this, we remarked that they never used one word of godliness or religion, or recommended themselves or their cause to God, but applied themselves wholly to the matter.”

Strange symptoms in such an age of religion as was that!—awful sign of the utter hardness and deadness to all spiritual truth—the utter destruction of all reverence for the unseen, which their dreadful tampering with holy things for unholy purposes had occasioned.

But it was not so with these unhappy women.

It was not so with Evelyn—alas, where else should she fly for shelter?

So awful a crime!—Was it possible?—Could it be her beloved, her Everard?—He whom she had talked with in sweet daily converse—had fed with—trifled with, loved, in all the fond familiarity of sweet domestic life. A criminal!—A conspirator!—The darkest of criminals—the most desperate of conspirators!—What he!—A monster of violence and cruelty—abhorred of God and man!—What, he?

What a distracting bewilderment is in her sweet blue eyes, now all distended and straining with horror—as she walks with hurried steps up and down the room: struggling and striving as it were vainly to

comprehend—to seize—to take in—to compass this astounding impossibility!

What he!—Everard!—her husband!—the father of her babes!

His tender parting kiss is yet warm upon her cheek, his tears are drying there.—What he!—A murderer! A traitor!—A felon!—What, he lend his hand to fire the mine, and blow thousands and thousands of innocent creatures—men, women, and children—babes—yea, little babes like his own—to atoms!

“Oh, my father!—my father!” at last burst forth, while a crowd of recollections of all that father’s teachings—forgotten, alas! too soon, under the influence of another—rushed to her heart. And at that name gushed forth a torrent of tears which preserved life and intellect for her children.

Restored to herself by this relief—Evelyn sought at once that fountain of grace and love, from whence consolation to her distracted heart alone could spring. And soothed in some degree by the influence of those supports, which are never by the trusting sought in vain, she could listen to what few particulars John Digby, almost as much in the dark as herself, was able to give.

Two vast sources of consolation were opened to them both—the crime had not been committed, and her husband was yet at large.

The letter brought by Bates was read with floods of tears, but with a consolation irrepressible. In spite of all this hideous misconception of what was righteous and just, Everard was still the same. It was still her Everard. That he could have been so blinded—that

he could have been so misled, remained with her, as it must for ever remain with all, a dark, inscrutable mystery of the human heart.

But his piety—his deep and sincere repentance—his gentle submission to the punishment of his crime—his tender regards, even in his cruellest moments, to others—testified by those simple fragments which he has left behind, and which afterwards reached her from his prison in the Tower—softened the distraction of her thoughts, and sweetened the bitterness and the horror of those recollections. He was still her Everard—he was still that angel of love and gentleness that had won the adoration of a character radically stronger than his own. She was a devout Catholic, and her church had many consolations to offer, for griefs such as hers. Had she been a Protestant, she would have found them under a still better form.

It was thought, at first, that the poor jester would have died of grief.

He was a loving, simple creature—and he had besides, however he came by it, such a clear sense of things, that no disguises could hide the truth of the matter from him.

It was not that Everard, his honoured master, was a fugitive and a vagabond; that he would assuredly be taken, and assuredly must die by the cruel hand of the executioner; but it was that he was a criminal—and it was the firm persuasion that he was a criminal through blind submission to the persuasion of his priests—it was this agonising regret, struggling with an indignation and rage which were too strong

for words, which heaved, and choked, and suffocated within the bosom of Fabian. His heart was breaking—the bodily agony and struggle was desperate. Evelyn was told of it—only she could sooth—they ventured to beseech her to come.

It was with the pity of an angel that she, mastering her own anguish, in compassion for that of one less able to endure—stood by his bed-side, and said—

“ We must submit to the will of God, Fabian. Be patient, poor boy. There is one who shall wash out the stain of sin. Let us both live to pray for him, that it may be so.”

She had touched the right string. As he held that dear kind hand in both his, and looked up in her face with a love, oh, far beyond the expression of words, the overcharged heart began already to disengage itself—one or two deep sighs broke from his labouring breast—one or two big tears rolled down those thin withered cheeks—and Fabian lived.

He remained with Evelyn ; after all, perhaps, her best earthly support. Many had sorrowed with her, all had sympathised with her, but their sorrow yielded to the course of things, and their sympathy died away. But Fabian’s sorrow was as her sorrow—his wound if not so deep, as incurable as hers. The inexpressible support and consolation of this simple communion of feeling cheered the remaining years of a life devoted to her duties and to her children.

How much, as years rolled on, as her sons sprang to manhood, and in the capricious character of the elder, the well-known Sir Kenelm Digby, she found cause for

griefs and anxieties known only to parents with children such as these—how far the devoted attachment of the poor fool must have consoled her, may be guessed by those who have known, that it is the *solitude* of sorrow, which is perhaps the most insupportable of all those different forms of suffering which never-dying regret—terrible visitor! puts on.

Eleanor received the intelligence in gloomy silence—the gloom of one who has long expected nothing from this world, who has long, in bitter disappointment, learned to hate rather than to endure it.

Grace Vaux died the founder of a convent abroad. I forbear to trace the details of her history. Of all this painful scene, peopled with the phantoms of these ghastly victims of priestly craft and perverted religion, this one is not the least painful—this, of a creature so pious, holy, and disinterested, waiting in humble attendance upon the footsteps of such a man as Father Darcy!

Smoothing with humble reverence the path of a base, unbelieving hypocrite—a gross, sensual lover of this world, incredulous of and indifferent to the existence of any thing better? This Grace Vaux!—so earnest, so devoted, so purely-minded, so deeply ascetic, so deeply self-sacrificing! This Saint Theresa!—in attendance upon a man such as this, receiving his letters with fervent thankfulness, and so blinded by her superstitious faith, as to read without comprehending their true character, such passages as these:

“We were very *merry* and *content* within.” This was when, in company with Hall, another Jesuit, he lay concealed under Mr. Abingdon’s roof at Henlip, after

all the victims of their policy had perished by the sword, or in miserable anguish under the cruel tortures of the scaffold. "We were very *merry* and *content* within." They were sitting in a small hidden nook, fed with sweetmeats, broths, caudles, and wine, through a small hole in a chimney. "We were very merry and content within, hearing the searchers every day more curious over us." *

Or this—

"I was lodged in the gate-house, and could not eat any thing, but went supperless to bed; and all the while there could eat very little; only contenting myself with bread, an apple, and some wine, according to my purse . . ."

Or this—

"On St. Valentine's day I came to the Tower, where I have a very fine chamber I am allowed every meal a draught of excellent claret wine; and I am liberal to myself and neighbours for good respects, to allow also of my own purse, some sack, &c. &c."

And not through the whole correspondence, one word of compassion, one single return upon himself, one single expression of pity for his friends and her friends, slaughtered but some few weeks before.

A reproach cast upon Mr. Catesby's memory is the only mention of them.

How this man lied upon his trial, confirming his declarations, as Lord Salisbury said, "so stiffly upon his soul, reiterating it with so many detestable execrations as it wounded the Lords to hear"—is matter of history.

* Garnet's letters to Anne Vaux. State Paper Office.

How he afterwards recanted all these declarations, and impudently justified himself by the doctrine of equivocation—is matter of history too.

How his memory was revered, and for aught I know, is still revered as a saintly martyr by that church which he dishonoured and disgraced—is matter of history also.

The rest may sleep in peace, deluded victims of unprincipled teachers—by wolves in sheep's clothing, and devils assuming the garb of angels, betrayed step by step into horrible crime. Even Guy Fawkes—Guido Fawkes—the bug-bear of the school-boy, as a creeping pitiful midnight assassin, with his matches and lantern, his peaked Spanish hat and long cloak—even he, may resume his place as a brave though relentless fanatical gentleman and soldier—but sooner or later the truth will be known—and the character of Father Darcy, Farmer, Whalley, Garnet, or by whichever of his many names he shall be remembered—shall sooner or later most assuredly be understood, and be handed down to the execration of mankind, among those who have dared to prostitute holy things to unrighteous purposes; who have blasphemed against the divinest part of man—his reverence for the powers unseen; have entered into that awful sanctuary of the Spirit of God, and installed the doctrines of the Devil.

“Woe unto ye who have taken away the key of knowledge, ye entered not in yourselves, and they that were entering in ye hindered. Ye blind guides which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!—Ye serpents!—Ye generation of vipers! How can ye escape the damnation of Hell?

“Woe unto him who shall offend one of these little ones”—teach one of these little ones to offend.

“It were better for him that a millstone were hanged to his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea.”

The sea of oblivion!

But a time is coming when that sea shall cast up its dead; when history shall be no longer a fable and a lie, but great and small shall come to judgment.

“And I beheld and saw, and the tables were set, and the books were opened, and great and small stood before God, and every one was judged by his works.”

One picture more, and I have done—Everard at his trial and in the Tower.

He is arraigned—but with the deep sense of guilt which lies heavy at his heart, shall he desire to escape? Shall he, by pleading not guilty, seal his criminality by a lie?—Not so.

“Having heard the indictment read, he showed a disposition to confess the principal part of it,* and so began to enter into a discourse. But being advertised that he must first plead directly to the indictment, guilty or not guilty, and afterwards he should be licensed to speak, he forthwith confessed the treason contained in the indictment, and so fell into a speech whereof there were two parts, motives and petitions.

“The first motive which drew him into this action was not ambition, or discontentment of estate, neither malice to any in parliament, but the friendship and love he

* Howel's State Tryals.

bore to Mr. Catesby, which prevailed so much, and was so powerful with him, as that for his sake he was ever contented and ready to hazard himself and his estate.

“The next was the cause of religion which alone,” as he said, “seeing it lay at the stake, he entered into a resolution to neglect in that behalf his estate, his life, his name, his memory, his posterity, and all worldly and earthly felicity whatsoever, though he did utterly extirpate and extinguish all other hopes for the restoring of the Catholic religion in England. And the third motive was that promises were broken with Catholics. And lastly they generally feared harder laws from this parliament against recusants; and that it was supposed that it should be made a *praemunire* only to be a Catholic.”

His petitions were few—they were; “that since the offence was confined and contained within himself, the punishment might extend only to himself, and not be transferred to his wife, children, sisters, or others; and, therefore, he humbly craved that his wife might enjoy her jointure; his son the benefit of an entail made long before this action was thought of; his sisters their just and due portions which were in his hands; his creditors their rightful debts—which that he might more justly set down under his hand, he requested before his death, his man (steward) might be licensed to come unto him. For himself he had only one petition: he entreated to be beheaded, desiring all men to forgive him: and that his death might satisfy them for his trespass.”

* “Jardine’s Criminal Tryals. Gunpowder Plot.”—An admirable specimen of historic investigation.

After a long and somewhat cruel speech from Sir Edward Coke, in which but small hope was held out that his anxieties for his family and creditors should be attended to, and none that his punishment should be commuted to beheading; the horrible sentence of the English law, as it then stood, for treason, was pronounced upon him. His demeanour seems to have melted the hearts of all present.

Upon the rising of the court Sir Everard, bowing himself to the Lords, said:

“ If I may but hear any of your Lordships say you forgive me, I shall go more cheerfully to the gallows.”

Whereupon the Lords said:

“ God forgive you and we do.”

He lies buried in a garden, where once was a small chapel belonging to his family, at his estate of Tilton in Northamptonshire. In the dead of the night they brought his mangled remains there; his brother, his wife, his sister, and Fabian, wept over his grassy tomb. No stone commemorates the place. The branches of the overhanging trees, as the night wind sighs among them, sing his lullaby.

“ There gather'd oft the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen are showers of violets found;
The red-breast loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.”

THE END.

